



I AM ONE IN FOUR

A photovoice project by
Dr. Maria Quinlan and Patrick Bolger

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Foreword

Secrecy, silence, shame. Disempowerment, humiliation, self-blame. These are the defining experiences of people who endure child sexual abuse. And the impact does not end in childhood, but continues to contaminate the lives of survivors as they move into adulthood. Survivors are often reluctant to tell their stories, fearing that they will be disbelieved. So often their fears are well-founded. Families deny the reality of what has happened and come together to support the abuser and exclude the survivor. Communities turn a blind eye. Those few survivors who turn to the criminal justice system to validate their experience face an almost impossible task in reaching the very high burden of proof required to obtain a conviction. The silence allows us all to pretend that child sexual abuse is not a reality in Irish society. The truth is denied and the loneliness for survivors can be unbearable.

When a survivor comes to therapy at One in Four they meet highly trained and experienced professionals who understand the difficult journey that must be followed to heal trauma of sexual abuse. But even in the intimacy of the therapy room, survivors struggle to find the language to describe the sexual abuse and how it has made them feel. Sometimes there are literally no words to convey the horror. The trauma is unspeakable.

Photovoice allows the participants to explore a different way of communicating the impact of sexual abuse. Creating images that encapsulate their experiences supports the survivors in finding a language to tell their painful truth directly and unambiguously. The result is a compelling, disturbing but inspiring exhibition that will resonate with the one in four Irish people who have been sexually abused, and will help create an understanding and awareness among those who have not.

I want to thank Dr Maria Quinlan and Patrick Bolger who volunteered their expertise and time to facilitate this extraordinary project, and our therapists Bobbi Grogan and Conn Dorai-Raj who supported the participants through the process. Most of all I want to thank the eight participants, clients of One in Four, who agreed to take part and who are willing to generously share their personal stories through this powerful photovoice exhibition.

Maeve Lewis
Executive Director, One in Four

Introduction

Fourteen years on from the SAVI report, which found that one in four people have experienced sexual violence in Ireland, and which gave the charity One in Four its name, we have gathered a collection of testimonies from people who have experienced childhood sexual violence¹.

When you look at prior research into the area of childhood sexual violence, one of the starkest findings is the low disclosure rate, coupled with a depth of research showing that a significant amount of people seeking support for other issues such as addiction, anorexia, depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation have experienced sexual violence². So we know that the disclosure of sexual violence is notoriously low, we know that the impacts are complex and multi-layered, we know that healing is possible and that there are a variety of therapeutic interventions that can help those of us who have experienced this trauma in our lives to overcome its harmful impacts. We know a lot and yet the silence remains and our responses as individuals and as a society still appear ill-informed.

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) work pioneered in the late 1990s in America by Dr Vincent Felitti from Kasier Permanente and Dr Robert Anda from the Centre of Disease Control, shed powerful light on the both the prevalence and the impact of childhood trauma³. Those working closely in this field understand the impact of childhood sexual violence well, they also know just how common it is, one in four appears to be unfortunately the tip of the iceberg, however our general understanding as individuals and as society is less developed. This project aims to in some small way fill that knowledge-gap. It seems timely to turn our lens towards a deeper understanding of the impact of childhood sexual violence.

By going directly to people who have experienced childhood sexual violence, and asking them to share their experiences, we have gathered a series of powerful testimonies. The courtroom is not the only place where testimony can be given. Photovoice is a powerful tool that illuminates a person's truth in a way that other methods which we have used do not appear to be able to do. It gives participants full control, and in the tradition of feminist, participatory research, moves the locus of power from researcher as 'expert' to the participant as the rightful expert on their experience.

One in Four's recently published 2017 Annual Report highlights the effect that seeking justice via the criminal justice system can have on victims of sexual violence. In her foreword to the report, Executive Director Maeve Lewis says that 'most survivors of sexual abuse have been deeply traumatised, and participating in a criminal trial can re-trigger that trauma....many of our clients describe the trial as disempowering, demeaning and humiliating...even if a guilty verdict is delivered...we need to hear the truth about the high incidence of child sexual abuse in Ireland and to understand the devastating effect sexual crimes have on the lives of survivors'. Justice comes in many forms and if gathering testimonies in a courtroom is characterised by humiliation and re-traumatisation, gathering testimonies via photovoice is characterised by empowerment and healing in an environment of unconditional support. It also gives us the opportunity to hear the truth of survivors.

Photographs help us to remember and articulate what is beyond our traumatised memories. Our traumatised minds, our traumatised bodies, our traumatised nervous systems do a remarkable job in designing intricate complex mechanisms

to shield us as much as possible from the pain of our trauma. Sadly however these are merely band aids on a deep bleeding wound.

It is only when we are seen, when we are heard and when our truth is witnessed that we begin to truly heal the wounds left behind by childhood sexual violence. It is only when we can look at our inner child and feel their pain and feel their aloneness, it is only when we can look at the gaping wound, it is only when we can name this wound that we can begin to heal. It is only when others, families, friends, communities, governments can truly witness these wounds that they themselves can also begin to heal. It is not our job to heal others, only ourselves.

The truth is that childhood sexual violence leaves a trail of destruction that damages all strands of our society. It can no longer be viewed in isolation as an individual trauma. When the weakest and most vulnerable in our society are violated, we are all violated. As a country we need to acknowledge and name the stigma attached to all forms of sexual violence. Sexual violence is all of our problems. On both sides of the violence sit sisters, brothers, mothers, fathers, daughters, sons. If we turn our heads to silence and close our eyes we are simply compounding the violence and embedding the trauma.

Dr. Maria Quinlan

Patrick Bolger



Research Design

For the purposes of this project, we wanted to bring together our respective methods from the worlds of visual sociology, ethnography, and feminist qualitative research on the one hand, and visual art, documentary and creative expression through images on the other. There is a strong tradition of academic and artistic collaboration across many disciplines. Bringing the two together we believe provides both an extra depth to the initial insight, and a stronger impact in terms of the analysis and presentation of the findings.

Together we have adapted our respective methodologies to design an innovative approach which aims to provide people with the space and tools to express and share their experiences in a safe and creative way. The base methodology we have used for this project is photovoice, and we have adapted it with the addition of a more in-depth ethnographically-informed approach to capturing narratives, and a therapeutically-informed approach to the facilitation of the workshops. As with all participatory research methods, there is an organic flow to how we have adapted the photovoice methodology and to how the group have engaged with it and made it their own.

Photovoice

Photovoice is a research method, an advocacy tool, and a narrative therapeutic technique which uses photographs, coupled with facilitated group dialogue and photo-captioning to give voice to people's lived experience of a particular issue. Photovoice as a research method has its roots in social activism and aims to provide a platform for people who are often silenced or marginalised in society to share their experiences. In doing so it has been found to be a powerful tool in empowering people who have often found their voices excluded in society⁴.

Visual images and accompanying stories serve to create a space where marginalised voices can be shared. Grounded in theories that shift the locus of control from those in positions of power to those whose standpoints are less often heard, the process of photovoice attempts to dismantle the traditional research relationship by equalising the distribution of power between researchers and participants. More traditional research methods tend to preference the researcher's voice - the researcher gathers stories and overlays them with their own analysis. Photovoice preferences the voice and knowledge of those participating in the project, providing a platform for them to tell their stories directly. In the tradition of inclusive, participatory knowledge-creation, it is research by and with people rather than 'on' people.

Using photographs to give voice to people who often feel unheard and unseen is a person-centred and co-created methodology that aims to be both a powerful and positive experience for the participants while also being an impactful way of providing deep insight into an issue for the wider society.

The process of reclaiming the self

Research clearly supports the idea that being seen and heard can be a powerful tool in healing from trauma, and photovoice has been found to be particularly helpful in the healing journey of sexual assault survivors. Rolbiecki et al (2016) found that the photo-taking, dialoguing, and exhibiting process of photovoice empowered people who have experienced sexual assault to take control of their story and their recovery, as well as to increase the wider public's understanding of the post-traumatic impacts of sexual assault⁵.

People who have experienced sexual violence as children can have their sense of self, autonomy, voice and power taken from them as part of the violating process of sexual violence and trauma. They can be shamed and silenced by their perpetrator and can then be re-traumatised and re-silenced if their disclosures are met by uninformed and insensitive responses⁶. Photovoice can be a powerful tool in re-instilling a sense of power and agency.

It has been found to not only reduce post-traumatic symptoms, but also to foster what has been termed 'post-traumatic growth'. This refers to the process where a sense of self, personal power and strength is recovered through a person's process of making meaning of their experience. Exhibiting their work has been found to facilitate participants in reclaiming control over their self-narratives, as well as educating stakeholders about the traumatic impacts of sexual assault⁷.

Photovoice has also been found to be a useful tool in reducing feelings of shame and self-

blame that can be associated with experience of childhood trauma, and to increase feelings of connectedness and control over recovery⁸. Sharing experiences within a supportive group environment has been found to both validate and decrease the interpersonal isolation evidenced among some survivors⁹.

Participants and process

This photovoice project was conducted with a group of eight clients of One in Four; four women and four men. Participants were identified and recruited via the One in Four clinical team.

- Creation of 'safe-space'
Space where people feel comfortable to share their feelings and experiences.
- Introduction to visual literacy
Creative excersises to get people comfortable using the method.
- Facilitated group discussion
Participants decide / agree on themes to guide their photo-taking.
- Sharing of photos
Each week the group share and explain selected photos.
- Final selection and captioning
Each person selects photos to share and is facilitated in captioning process.

Ethical considerations and approach:

The use of photovoice as a methodology brings with it particular ethical considerations in terms of participant safety, data protection, control, ownership and dissemination/sharing.

Participants' safety and emotional wellbeing is the number one consideration of this project. Throughout each stage of the project participants were given the option of sharing their photographs, thoughts, experiences or of choosing not to. The primary aim of this project was to create a safe space where people could express themselves via photography to the degree that they wished to do so, without any requirement to share that with the other members of the group.

The relationship between the relatively private and more public aspects of a project is a dynamic and delicate one, which requires careful balancing. When working with individuals who have experienced trauma, caution is exercised to ensure participants are emotionally protected, particularly if they are producing work based on personal experiences. To ensure that the group was supported from a therapeutic perspective, two One in Four psychotherapists, Dr Conn Dorai-Raj and Bobbi Grogran sat in on each of the workshops and provided support to the group throughout the project.

We have received specialist training in the photovoice methodology from the PhotoVoice Organisation and adhere to the organisations statement of ethical practice, and the phased approach to achieving informed-consent¹⁰.

I Am One in Four

The following 72 photographs explore a variety of themes relating to the experience and impact of childhood sexual violence. The overall aim of this project is to let the photographs and narratives speak for themselves, however there are a consistent set of themes which we feel it is worthwhile to highlight. There is a shared nature to our experience in terms of the impact, short and longer term, the response with which disclosure was met, and the tools which have helped in healing.

Silence

Perhaps the most consistent and strongest theme across the experiences outlined herein is silence. Silence comes in many layers for people who have been sexually violated as children – the first silence is the victims' own silence, a silence enforced in the first instance by the perpetrator. In some cases the perpetrator ensures silence through the process of grooming and befriending, in all cases through the process of asserting power and control. There is also the internalised guilt, shame and stigma that participants in the project experienced which serves to keep victims silence.

I remember saying to him 'I'm going to tell on you, I'm going to tell on you' and his reaction was 'if you tell anybody, I'll tell them you liked it'. Those words always stuck in my head – 'If you tell anybody, I'll tell them you liked it'. So there was nearly a question in your own head, would people believe that? **(Mary O)**

I internalised the guilt and shame of those who abused me. I kept their secrets. It made me very quiet as a child, I felt completely silenced. **(Sarah)**

He used to call me his beautiful little girl with the beautiful hair. For years I felt that I had invited the sexual abuse by liking the fact that he had noticed me. **(Elaine)**

I had opportunity to tell people at that time about the abuse, but I didn't tell anyone. **(Keith)**

The second layer of silence is the silence experienced upon disclosure – the silence from family and friends.

Despite the idea that rates of disclosure of childhood sexual violence is low, most of the participants within this project either disclosed directly to family-members as children or adults; or they believe that their sexual violence was carried out in such an explicit manner as to be impossible to have been unknown within their family or community. There is a strong sense within the group that their sexual violation while not explicitly discussed, must have been known about by other people.

See no evil, speak no evil, hear no evil – and that's the way it was. The abuse wasn't spoken about. **(Des)**

What bothered me was that this used to go on - in my granny's house there was always people in the house; in the cinema there was always people there – somebody must have known. **(Keith)**

A recurring theme amongst participants is disclosure, followed by silence from the people with the power to put an end to it, or to provide help in the aftermath.

There was loads of people there, and loads of people knew – my parents, my sisters, one of my sisters was married to a guard, there were nurses in my family. There was a whole range of people who knew and that could have done something to save me, and nobody did anything. **(Mary B)**

I outed the abuser. I told my sister, his wife. She accepted what I said and cried and hugged me. The next day she went on holidays with him. I believe she knew long before I told her.... I told my father and he said 'say your prayers.....I'm not prepared to upset another family'. I anticipated his reaction so I wasn't surprised. **(Mary B)**

The third layer of silence is the cultural silence, the silence participants feel from society – the turning away from this most traumatic of crimes.

What really makes me angry in relation to sexual abuse is the general lack of interest....it's too dirty a subject. **(Mary B)**

When childhood sexual violence occurs and the trauma is ignored it is the equivalent of abusing yet again...if your trauma and pain are met with silence and shame there can be no healing. For the individual, the family or the community. **(Patrick)**

It was the whole environment – the sexual abuse and the corporal punishment. You couldn't ask anybody for help, you couldn't tell anybody. You're locked in, you're trapped. **(George)**

This is further reinforced by the lack of support for victims and lack of consequences for perpetrators. There is a shared-sense amongst participants that there is a lack of responsibility at a community and a statutory level with regard to caring for children who have been sexually assaulted, and also with regard to prosecuting perpetrators.

I reported him, through the help of One in Four, to the HSE seven years ago. Initially they said they couldn't do anything unless I brought a criminal charge. Then they didn't know who was dealing with it, then the case was closed, then it wasn't. Seven years later, still nothing. This abuser stills walk free, larger than life, adored by all, even those who know what he is. **(Mary B)**

The culture of collusion and cover-up is highlighted by several participants, with several having gone through civil cases which resulted in non-disclosure agreements with religious orders and family members. There appears to be a lack of trauma-informed investigation, a lack of restorative justice within the wider system.

The priest who did it to me is now dead but the leader of that particular order, I met them in this very room in One in Four...it was just as if 'that's it, thanks very much' after I explained what happened to me. I think I was talking for about twenty minutes and they said 'ok are we finished now?'. To me that just sums up the torment over the years. **(George)**

The wider impact of this on the community, on society is touched on by several participants.

The particular legacy of church cover-up, whereby known paedophiles were moved from one parish to another has left a trail of destruction which has yet to be fully mapped within the Irish context;

Thomas Naughton is dead now. He was finally in 2009 charged with abusing a young boy in Valkeymount. He had abused in Aghrim Street before he was moved to Valkeymount. He was moved from Valkeymount to Donnycarney and from Donnycarney to Ringsend. Everywhere he went he abused young boys. Thomas Naughton left a trail of destruction and trauma and death in his wake. **(Patrick)**

A further element of cultural silence is the silence related to sexuality which several participants highlight. They speak of a culture where the discussion of even healthy aspects of sex or natural bodily functions such as menstruation were considered taboo. This immaturity regarding the ability to discuss sex, this repression of sexuality further reinforced silence through the stigma associated with discussing sexual violence.

I lived in a house where nearly to mention the word 'period' was off limits. You couldn't even mention it... everything had to be dignified...you don't talk about that kind of stuff in front of your brothers. **(Mary O)**

Female sexuality had to be hidden, covered-up, not spoken about. It's like it was a powerful force to be feared. **(Sarah)**

All three forms of silence serve to reinforce the feelings of shame and stigma which keep many victims of sexual violence silent in the first place. Secrets, lies, shame, guilt, denial and stigma combine to form a powerful toxic environment wherein a child's voice is kept muted. This environment of silence feeds into the isolation felt by participants in this study, and silence is a breeding ground for perpetrators.

Language also plays an important role in the silencing – rape, sexual violation and torture are minimised to euphemisms such as 'horseplay',

'interfering', 'groping' and even the catch-all term of 'abuse' can serve to distance and sanitise the truth of people's experience.

The impact of childhood sexual violence

Much of the work produced by participants for this project focuses on the impact, both short and longer term, that experiencing sexual violence as a child has had on them. The impact of childhood sexual violence experienced by the participants is again multi-layered in nature. There is impact at a personal individual level, at a family level and at a community level. The trauma which childhood sexual violence inflicts and leaves behind has far-reaching consequences, especially when it is not dealt with in an appropriate manner.

In none of the cases outlined herein was the trauma of experiencing childhood sexual violence met with a response from care-givers which could be described as anything close to 'best-practice'. In all cases the child was left to carry the trauma alone, and that impact was felt in a variety of ways.

Participant's childhoods are characterised by loneliness and isolation, with a disconnection from those around them;

I had to learn how to survive on my own. I was left alone with my trauma. When you are eight years old and you are alone there is no safe place. **(Patrick)**

When you have secrets that you can't share with anyone, you feel completely alone, you can't fully participate in life, you can't easily make healthy connections with others....I felt very isolated and deeply lonely. **(Sarah)**

I disclosed my sexual abuse for the very first time after nearly 40 years of carrying the secret on my own. **(Elaine)**

I had one good friend in my teenage years, but I felt desperately lonely, nobody understood, and I kept thinking that there's no family like this....that's what abuse does to you, you feel disconnected from people. **(Mary O)**

I felt very alone...I was consumed with guilt and shame. **(Mary B)**

People showing genuine concern, or especially if I was anxious or nervous, people being kind...sometimes it could make me burst into tears, if someone said something nice to me. **(Eva)**

Fear is a deep-seated legacy of trauma experienced by participants, experienced at both an emotional and a physical level;

I only have memories of being afraid. Of everything. **(Patrick)**

He knew he had that control, and that I'd be frozen in fear. **(Mary O)**

I haven't flown in an airplane for eighteen years. I was taken off an airplane and was taken to hospital because I went into complete shutdown. Now I'm working on it...I've been doing exposure therapy and I can get into lifts now and I'm not as bad at being in locked-up places. **(Frank)**

I don't think I've stopped running in my life. **(George)**

There is much loss associated with the experience of childhood sexual violence amongst participants within the project. Childhood sexual violence damages your trust in yourself, and your ability to trust others; it impacts on your ability to know and set healthy boundaries; your sense of self-worth, confidence and self-esteem;

To be abused by my sister's husband, it absolutely changed me...I was never the same...I felt shame and guilt and I carried that all my life...never feeling I was good enough. **(Mary O)**

Your self-confidence, your self-esteem take such a hammering...you end up in a cycle of repeating old dysfunctional patterns which are based on not trusting your feelings. **(Sarah)**

I would question who I really was...like some worthless piece of crap. **(Mary B)**

Further emotional and psychological consequences include anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicidal-ideation and attempts at taking ones own life;

...that grey ache feeling that zero anything, empty, depression was about as human as I got for quite a long time. **(Eva)**

I was about twenty, I was driving and took a few drinks and was lucky to survive an accident – because of the frame of mind I was in, I really didn't care whether I survived it. **(Mary O)**

Fortunately I'm here today and I failed. I tried to commit suicide by jumping off [a bridge]. **(Keith)**

I've had suicidal ideation for a ridiculous amount of time.... the first time I ever self-harmed was when I was about five. **(Eva)**

As the impacts trickle outward to the family environment, participants describe experiencing a loss of childhood and familial bonds that are damaged and disrupted as a further consequence of trauma associated with childhood sexual violence going unmanaged;

I left home at 15...you left home to protect yourself. I became independent very very young, living on my own. **(Frank)**

This man was quite manipulative and quite calculating and cunning so he knew when I was going to be in the house on my own. I literally felt for most of my teenage years I was under siege. **(Mary O)**

This is how I've lived most of my life – in a glass box, where no one can see me, no one can hear me. I'm just a shadow within the family. **(Des)**

I feel like I've lost so much....loss of siblings, nieces and nephews, loss of weddings, communions, confirmations, family time at Christmas. **(Mary O)**

There've been lots of losses, even my kids when they were young I wasn't able to hug them because of things that had happened to me from a sexual nature, you'd be afraid to do that kind of stuff. **(Frank)**

The work of healing

The participants in this project are relative outliers when it comes to the disclosure of and help-seeking for childhood sexual violence. As outlined earlier in this report, disclosure of childhood sexual violence is notoriously low, and help-seeking for the longer-term impacts of childhood trauma is also low. All participants within this project have disclosed what happened to them to at least someone in their lives, and all have sought professional therapeutic help from One in Four and in many cases from other psychological services. Thus we have a group of people who are involved in active healing work – several have been seeking and receiving therapeutic interventions for a decade or more.

Undoing the wide-ranging, multi-layered, complex impacts of childhood trauma takes time, effort and dedication to ‘doing the work’.

I'd say the first group therapy I took part in was when I was about 15...and I've never really stopped trying to get help. I keep trying things and keep taking the parts of the therapies that help me and nurture me, and make me stronger and keep going. **(Eva)**

I feel like I'm coming to a place of power and of strength now where I can speak about what happened to me, and own it, and take responsibility for my recovery from it....it's been a slog to get to where I am now, but I like the view. **(Elaine)**

I'm able to open up about it now because I've had a lot of counselling, One in Four have been very good too me. It helped me to understand an awful lot of things. It's only through coming to One in Four that I understood there's a direct link back to what happened and the panic attacks. **(Frank)**

Allied to formal psychological interventions in the form of therapy, the group have found healing and solace in art, writing, music, physical exercise, yoga and meditation. Work, strong professional identities have also been used to cope and heal from the impact of trauma;

I've painted my whole life since a very very early age...I think it was my way of dealing with what was happening... it's a calm and positive force and I just love it. **(Mary O)**

By writing the images, ideas, feelings, on paper it has exposed parts of me which I buried for such a long time – it has enabled me to be expressive and allow other people, including family, to have a greater awareness of me. **(Keith)**

Yoga and therapy have been life-changing, as has the ability to do meaningful work which feeds and heals my soul. **(Sarah)**

Reconnecting with the wounded inner child is an important part of the process of recovery for many participants;

It's a time to take the little boy by the hand and reassure him he is and always will be safe, that it wasn't his fault, he is never to blame, that he is loved, and was always cherished...the curly-haired boy with the glasses is free to be a child again. **(Keith)**

The sense of excitement and wonder [that I had as a child], with the help of therapy I am learning to reconnect with....I try to connect with my child and with myself, and remind myself that we were happy, we are happy and that I have a right to be alive. **(Elaine)**

The healing power of healthy connection with others is also a powerful tool in recovery and healing;

Whatever else I might do, [my marriage] is my greatest achievement, to live a sane, sexy, healthy, appropriate relationship with another person in spite of the trauma of the abuse. **(Elaine)**

Finding my tribe has been an important part of my healing process. Creating strong healthy bonds with wonderful people who see and hear you, who are walking a healing path themselves is fundamental to me. **(Sarah)**

Through a variety of methods including talk-therapy, creative arts, music, exercise, meditation practices, participants have worked hard to regain what they have lost. They have put a huge

amount of energy into doing the healing work via whatever means has been available to them. While the healing work is key to participants' recovery, it is important to note that this healing work takes significant resources of time, effort, and money, and it can be an exhausting process;

It's just so much fucking work all the time. **(Eva)**

This brief look at some of the overarching commonalities of the participants' experiences provides just a small introduction to the following first person visual and written narratives. There are many more experiences and themes explored with more nuance and depth in the following section.

Elaine



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I love this colour. It reminds me of where I used to live in France, that's where I disclosed my sexual abuse for the very first time after nearly 40 years of carrying the secret on my own. It was in France too that I worked with a therapist to come to Dublin for a weekend to make my statement to the police on these premises

[in One in Four]. France has always felt like my spiritual and cultural home, and even now when I go back there I feel very much at home. I always yearned to come back to Ireland permanently yet always felt so separate and unconnected from everything even when I was right here.

My mum was going through some photos last year and came across this photo strip... this is the two of us in Dublin Airport in June 1972 (I know the date and location because my father, in his wonderful way of dating everything which I proudly continue, wrote them on the back). I love this photo and when she gave it to me I was jolted by the reminder that there were happy times before the sexual abuse began.

I had the photos blown up and framed, and gave Mum a copy for her birthday. I told her that it was important that we remember that we were happy and that there was a time in my childhood when sexual abuse did not exist.

I love the expression on my face here, the sense of excitement and wonder that I can see and that with the help of therapy, I am learning to reconnect with. The photo is on my desk... and I say hello to myself every day when I sit down to work. I do it to connect with my child and with myself, and to remind myself that I was happy, that we were happy and that I have the right to be alive today, and to be happy.



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I loved my long hair as a child and always wore it in two high pony-tails. The man who sexually abused me was the school janitor and he was in charge of giving out the school lunches. He said he would always know where I was in the midst of all the little girls walking down the corridor because I was the one with the two pony-tails that would swing as I walked. He told me that I was pretty and he used to call me his beautiful little girl with the beautiful long hair. For years I felt that I had invited the sexual abuse by liking the fact that he had noticed me.

I had to wait for him every day in a little room next door to where the lunches were given out. He would come in with my lunch and close the door. There was a whole ritual to how he would take off his jacket, lay my lunch on the table... the whole thing. He would keep my head in place while he was abusing me by gripping my pony-tail. When he was finished he would give me my lunch, open the door and let me out.

This went on every day, Monday to Friday, throughout second class, third class and fourth class. I don't know why it took me so long but towards the end of fourth class it dawned on me that if I didn't have the long hair I wouldn't be his little girl anymore. I went home from school that day, it was a Tuesday or a Wednesday, and I told my mum that I wanted to have a bath and that I wanted her to cut my hair short. Of course she tried to talk me out of it and she tried to get my dad to talk me out of it too but I was adamant. My parents remember that night. I have since spoken to them about the abuse and they finally know why I wanted my hair cut off.

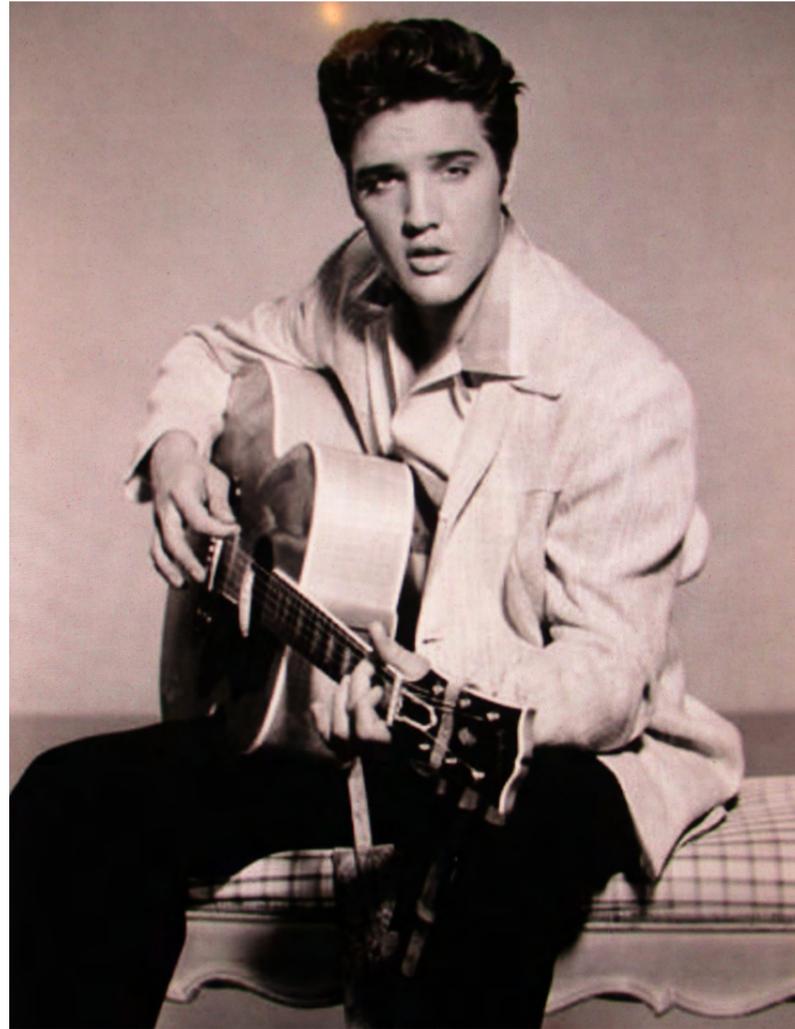
When I went into school the following day and the teacher told me that I looked like a boy I was secretly thrilled. Mum had cut my hair alright but I had told her it wasn't short enough and



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had made her cut it even shorter. I went down to get lunch with the other girls in my class and I got into line as usual; as had happened every single day for the previous three years, I stood in line and waited for the nod from him to go into the room and wait for him. He completely ignored me and looked right through me as though he didn't see me. I went back to my classroom barely daring to believe what had just happened. He never looked at me or touched me again. I didn't realise it until years later but I had unwittingly saved my own skin.

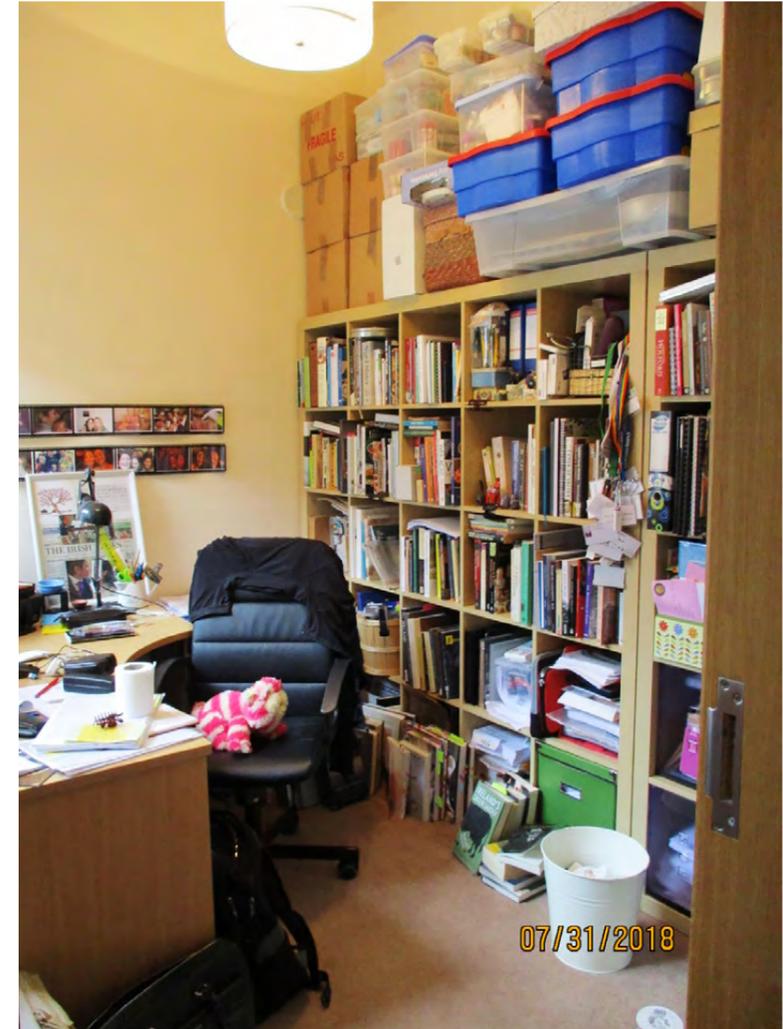
Having sacrificed my long hair once I keep it long these days as my gift to myself.



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On Sunday afternoons we used to visit my grandmother. I would sneak up to my aunties' bedroom and listen to her Elvis records. I love music and I love dancing and Elvis took me away from what was waiting at school every Monday. I'm not such a fan of Jailhouse Rock and Blue Suede Shoes, I like the more gentle stuff like Pocket Full of Rainbows or The Wonder of You,

especially the version by Conor O'Brien from the Villagers. I like Conor's version so much that I had it played at my wedding last year. I also love Conor's song Courage, where he sings about how it took him a long time to get to where he is in his life now and that he finally feels free. On good days, I feel exactly the same way too.



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This is my study, I spend most of my time here. I've surrounded myself with things that mean something to me. Bagpuss is my connection to childhood and I have photos of my family and the people I love on the walls around me. At the back in the white frame are pictures from my wedding day which was just a little over a year ago. Whatever else I might do, that relationship is my greatest achievement, to live a sane, sexy, healthy, appropriate relationship with another person in spite of the trauma of the abuse.

This photo represents work, but in the very best sense of the word – the emotional and the practical. I feel like I'm coming to a place of power and of strength now where I can speak about what happened to me, and own it, and take responsibility for my recovery from it. I spent most of my life hoping and searching for somebody or something that could make it better, rather than looking to me. It's been a slog to get to where I am now, but I like the view better these days!

Keith



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Green grass, big oak and horse chestnut trees, granny's house not so many happy memories, only disgusting, shameful distorted ones. So I used to go outside and spend hours hiding in and around them, sun or rain. It was better than being inside and feeling anxiety and stress.

Trees and flowers became my counsellors, I used

to talk to them all the time, I used to tell them the dark secrets of disgust and shame. They were non-judgemental, excellent listeners and always available when I needed them.

Little boy I hear your cries, little boy I'm here to help, little boy you're now safe.



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Bees - I used to catch them, they'd give me a focus when I had amassed feelings and thoughts when I stayed in the house of horrors. I was like a bee, always moving, avoiding standing still in case I was noticed. I was a busy bee.

Unfortunately, later bees became a target – I counter-transferred my trauma onto bees, bees became the victims. No air, sealed caps on jars - like me they were trapped, looking for a way out that never came and there was never any help on the horizon.



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I burned a lot of bridges in my life, with my family. Bridges are something I've gone over and gone under. Bridges are strong and capable of taking massive loads, lots of stress and weight. That's how I felt as a result of the experience of sexual violence – heavy burdens and huge weights, feeling like everyone is just driving over you. Solid, stuck in the same place as people and opportunities pass you by. Later on in life it would again be a big part of my sad existence;

I saw it as escapism, a way to end the futile fear, to stop the laughter of jibes and jeers. To clear my head, get away from the shame and the disgust, horrible smells and most of all fear. A chance to finally loosen the grip on drugs, alcohol and beer. The start, the end, perhaps a new beginning. It would be over quick because I'm not good at swimming.

Fortunately, I'm here today and I failed. I tried to commit suicide jumping off this bridge. I can think about it and speak about it in a different way now, it was an opportunity for me to have a fresh start, to seek acknowledgement, seek justice, seek judgements. Prepare to burn bridges, move forward. I'm still here and the bridge is still here. We're both a lot older, it takes me away from places of hurt and allows me to travel in

the direction that now gives me support. Still vivid images the reels of film still turn in my mind. More like a scar than an open wound now.

The significant thing about the bridge is that my abuser took me to a cinema where he worked and the bridge was at the rear of the cinema. I was very fortunate when I tried to take my own life because it was a high flow river and I was a better swimmer than I thought I was, because I ended upstream rather than downstream. I was brought to Blanchardstown hospital and I was sectioned to St Loman's Hospital. I stayed there for five days, and the experience of that flicked me into not doing it again, it was horrible – there were people there with real problems. I had opportunity to tell people at that time about the abuse, but I didn't tell anyone.

My abusers house was over the bridge and on the left. His mother's house, he abused me there and also abused me at the cinema which is where the trees are. It's now an Ulster Bank building – it still has the same shape; the original walls are there.

There're plenty old scars on there on the bridge like myself, chipped paint. It hasn't changed.



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This is the Lucan cinema, the Premier Cinema. The bridge is to the rear of it. It's kind of ironic that the picture on the billboard says 'There's More To It Than Meets The Eye'. I used to be taken through the gate and up the concrete staircase there. What looks like the grim reaper in the corner there, there's a door and I used to go in there. It was the projection room. My uncles' job was to show the kids matinees. The two rooms at the front were display rooms and all the old posters from the old films used to be in there.

As I child I was forced to walk up steps, dark, wet broken glass, old papers, smelly damp, mucky green mould, from a leaking roof dropping over time onto the concrete steps. It should have been a place of wonder, imagination, laughter, fascination. Instead it became like the darkness, forced sickness, doom and gloom, shame, guilt, a fucking nightmare of sorts. It became a film of

disgust and a fragile, impressionable child's life that followed him into adulthood.

My room was covered in posters, all the walls, all the ceilings. I never got to see a film. All my friends were going to ET, Back to the Future and BMX Bandits, all those films – I never got to see any of them. I always got promised I'd see them, but I never got to see them. I've seen them now.

The billboard is very poignant as well because this is a man who was given trust to look after me and to say he's destroyed my life is an understatement. I've been through all the systems, criminal, civil.

What bothered me was that this used to go on - in my granny's house there was always people in the house; in the cinema there was always people there – somebody must have known.



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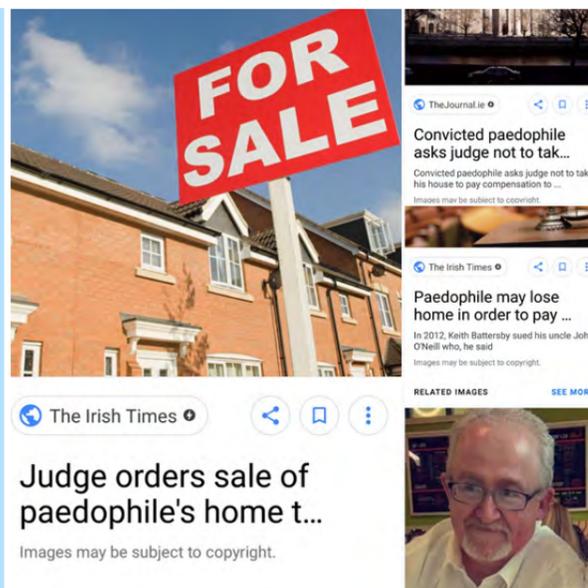
This stone is representative of the home place of my abuser, the estate where he abused me sexually, emotionally, physically, and psychologically. It also is suggestive of a headstone. I've only had the courage to enter this housing estate this week, he no longer lives there thanks to the justice system. He is gone but the damage will never be forgotten.



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A Lucan taxi call-centre worker who sexually abused his young nephew over 28 years ago will be sentenced later at Dublin Circuit Criminal Court.

John O'Neill (aged 43) of Sarsfield Park pleaded guilty to indecently assaulting Mr Keith Battersby, then aged between six and eight years old, at his home and at a local cinema on dates between May 1982 and December 1984. He has no previous convictions.



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Newspaper article from 2010 my perp finally pleads guilty. 3-year sentence 2 suspended 1 year attend probationary service €500-euro bond. A judgement within the system, anonymity waived, justice in the public forum....The mighty O'Neill

has fallen. Justice is really served judge sees through the lies and continual lack of remorse or consideration for me, the victim again. The media shame this disgusting paedophile who really is void of any moral compass.

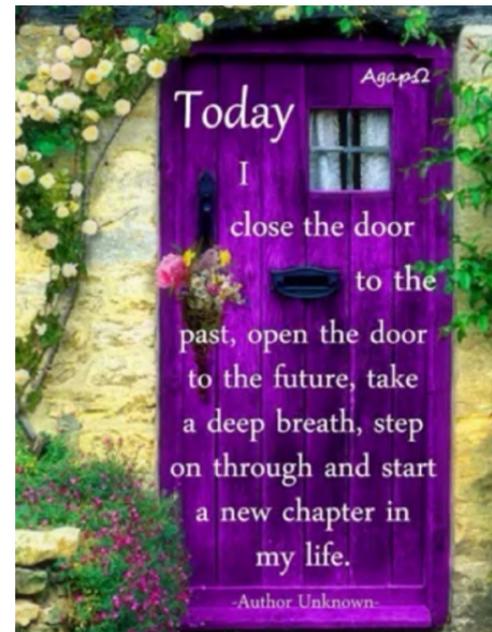
More articles, headlines. The watch represents the time spent pursuing my perpetrator; it also represents time healing, time forgiving, time for recognition, time for all those who ever questioned or doubted the truth, a time for a future, a time for my rock my wife, and now my legacy my son, time for my father and mother; time for my sisters, time for gratitude, a time for

the endless support of my friend Trevor, a time to be thankful to be a survivor living and striving to be the best person I can be. A time to take the little boy by the hand reassure him he is, and always will be, safe, that it wasn't his fault he is never to blame, that he is loved and was always cherished. The curly-headed boy with the glasses is free to be the child again.



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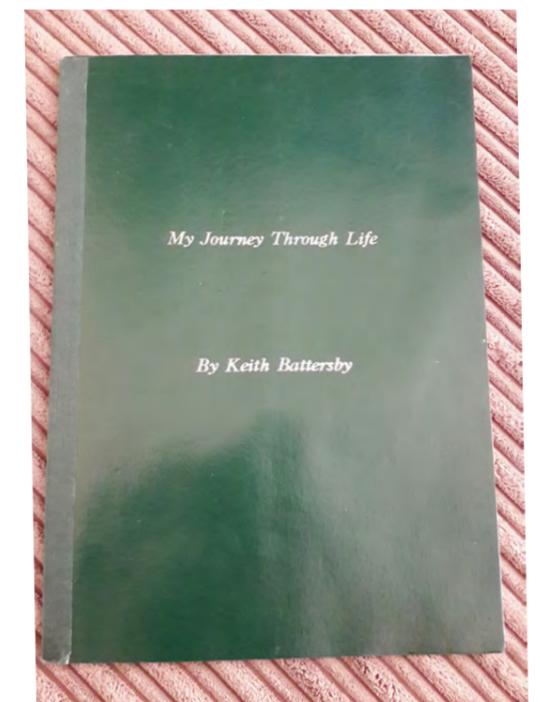
These photos represent my future. For over 10 years we tried in vain to have a child. All the stress of court cases and my childhood trauma had made me resign psychologically that I'd never be a father; that it would never be possible. But one year on I have a beautiful baby boy - our miracle baby.



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Always searching to help the helpless little boy to rid him of the loneliness, sadness, disbelief and shame to reach his hand into mine and together we step in the new future trying to make scars of open wounds.

Learning to Heal from the inside out at times has been very traumatic. My journey has had lots of downs but the few ups have inspired me to continue to be a survivor. By writing the images, ideas, feelings, on paper it has exposed parts of me which I buried for such a long time - it has enabled me to be expressive and allow other people, including family, to have a greater awareness of me, of Keith, an understanding of the anguish, anxiety, shame and fear I have felt for many years.



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Mary O



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This represents how my life was, it was a mess, it was chaotic. My sister's husband started abusing me two-months before my 13th birthday. She was in having her first baby, and he was really kind, I think it was pre-meditated – I wanted to see the baby so he organised with my parents, and he knew there was a vulnerability in the

family, my father was an alcoholic, and he showered me with attention. I was delighted to be going in to see the baby, but when he said I'd be staying overnight it was almost like a gut feeling that there was something not right – I instinctively knew. This picture represents turmoil in my life.



© Mary O | 2018 | I am One in Four

This memorial for me represents the loss of a childhood. My mother was a nurse so she worked night shifts, and my father would be out drinking and I had older siblings that were off out doing their own thing and this man [my abuser] was quite manipulative and quite calculating and cunning so he knew when I was going to be in the house on my own. I literally felt that for most of my teenage years I was under siege. I'd be hiding under the window ledges or I'd be pleading with my sister and her boyfriend not to go to the cinema, please don't leave if I saw his car pulling up. And they'd go, they'd just say we can't wait, the bus will be here in 10 minutes.

I just don't understand it – I feel like I've lost so much, it represents the loss of seven siblings, loss of nieces and nephews, loss of weddings, communions, confirmations, family time at Christmas. I see the impact of alcohol on eight children, and I'm beginning to accept that my siblings will never accept that I've been abused. They'll continue to protect this man – he worked in one hospital, so did my sister – it's too high a price to pay. Would it reach the papers? It would yeah, it would, and beyond. So it's too high a price to pay, and they'll never support me. Never.



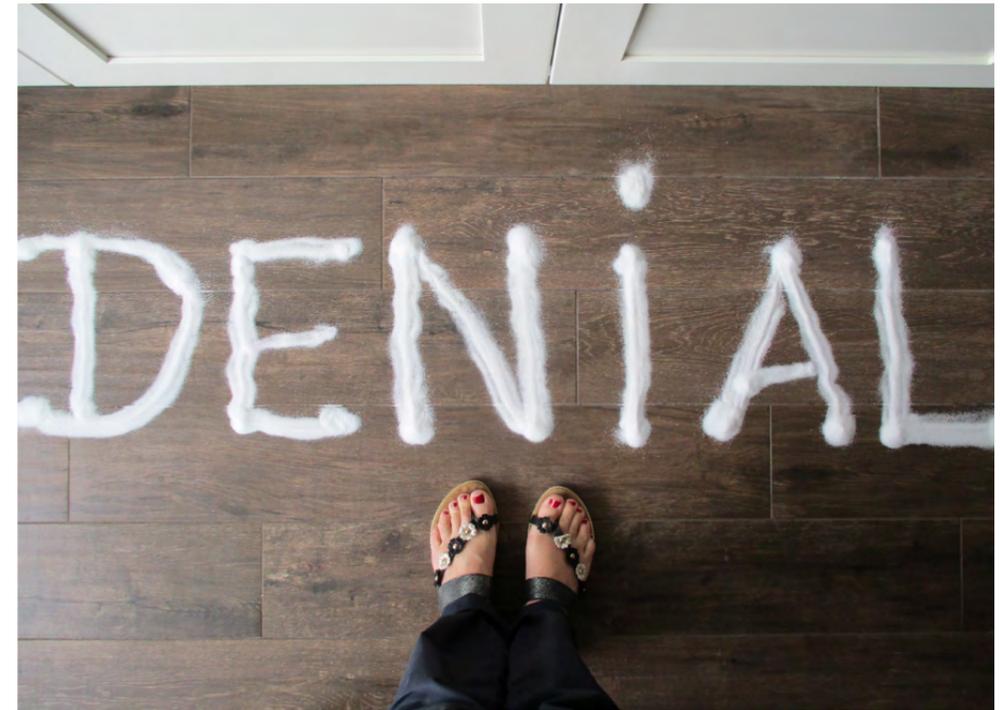
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This is the way I feel that the abuse has blighted my life. I'm 55 now, and literally since the abuse started, it was like a volcano of pain that would come up and go down. About three years after it started I ran in from a car and disclosed it to my mother and to other members of the family that were there and I was put in a position of telling my sister and I was met with 'you're a liar', 'it was horse-play' and you know, it never was mentioned again after that. It was only when I came to One in Four for group therapy, that it kind of clicked with me that no-one ever checked in on me, was I ok?.

Even significant events in my life, like the birth of my baby, has been marred by the abuse – and of course the pain rose its head again, and of course my family were good at managing me, 'oh would you get on with your life, sure you've a baby'. It was always this case of just get on with your life, they were very good at managing me.

But he was protected – he was protected by my five sisters and two brothers, and my parents – they protected him. They knew he was a grabber and a groper which was nearly indication enough to know that something was not well.

Emotionally I'm totally disconnected, it was pure fluke that I went to a mindfulness meditation class and I cried through it. Week on week, I'm about six or seven weeks into it now, I'm crying and connecting with emotions that I never connected with before and that hurt that I've carried in my gut the constant pain, that constant ache, that I've carried all my life – is starting to ease. It's been hard, even for my kids, the whole experience, taking these photographs has affected them – they've said 'I'm really proud of you mum, but this is very hard for us'. I was really grateful that they acknowledged it, and my husband found it difficult as well.



© Mary O | 2018 | I am One in Four

I actually think my family's denial has caused me so much pain. I have fought, argued, strived all my life for their acknowledgement, their affirmation. I feel like they never accepted me. I feel like as long as I sang from their hymn sheet I was accepted and everything was ok but the minute I raised the issue of the abuse it was like they go into shut down mode, ignore me, stand back from me, not phone me, not call me. Almost like

a very subtle form of bullying until I'd be quiet and shut-up. And it really is like rubbing salt in the wounds.

Doing stuff like that at home [setting up this photo] was hard for my son and daughter but I think it meant a great deal to them as well. I actually felt nearly closer to them, it's strange.



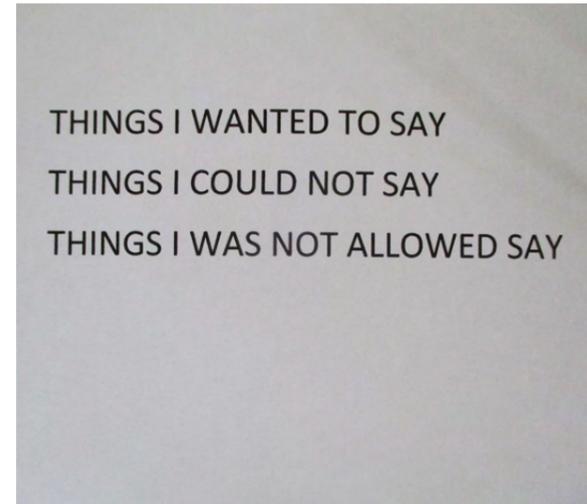
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That stop-sign has been in my head for years. I just always thought that all the warning signs were there – a man in his twenties that was taking a child out in a car; constantly interested in a small child, he started going out with my sister when I was eight or nine – and lavishing me with attention. I think all the warning signs were there, he was grabbing and groping at my other sisters and they would just laugh it off, ah sure that's just the way he is. So it was accepted and it was tolerated and nobody did shout stop. Nobody challenged him.

This man actually feels very comfortable in himself, comfortable when we go to family events. Like the last christening I was at, he sat

right in front of me and that was the time I thought, I can't do this anymore. My daughter was with me and she knew, she knew then – she was seventeen and she knew, and I made contact with One in Four after that. He sat right in front of me and obviously my body language...I couldn't string two words together, and that was the effect he had on me. Just that power, and I think he knew it, he actually sat across from me and he knew it. He knew I was a bumbling wreck, that was the way I felt.

I don't feel like that today. I feel better. I still have a long way to go, but I feel better than I was.



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This picture reflects the loneliness I felt and the isolation. I think I had isolated myself, I had one good friend in my teenage years, but I felt desperately lonely, nobody understood, and I kept thinking that there's no family like this. There couldn't be anybody else who would treat their child like this, who would treat their sister like this.

When my mother died suddenly and my father threw me out - I was twenty – the only person that offered me a place to stay was my brother in law, who had abused me, and my sister. It was never an option, and I was so lucky with the career that I had that I could move into a nurses home, but there was that inner loneliness that you feel – that you could be in a room full of people, you could be in Croke Park and that inner loneliness that you feel inside is there. I think that's what abuse does to you, you feel disconnected from people. My mantra as a teenager was; 'people can't be depended upon; you can't depend on people'. Because of counselling this has changed and I feel more positive about the future.

This was the first day of the mindfulness course, they went to your throat. Here's the centre of things – things that you want to say, things that you couldn't say and things that you weren't allowed to say...and my tears just streamed constantly for I don't know how long and I said it to them [disclosed the abuse to the facilitators] afterwards because I thought I needed to say something, and they've been extremely kind. I'm of the mind to accept their kindness because I've looked for support from people who were never ever going to give me support and I was looking in all the wrong places. I've gotten support from people I hardly know and I'm accepting that support now. I always wanted support from family and it was never there.



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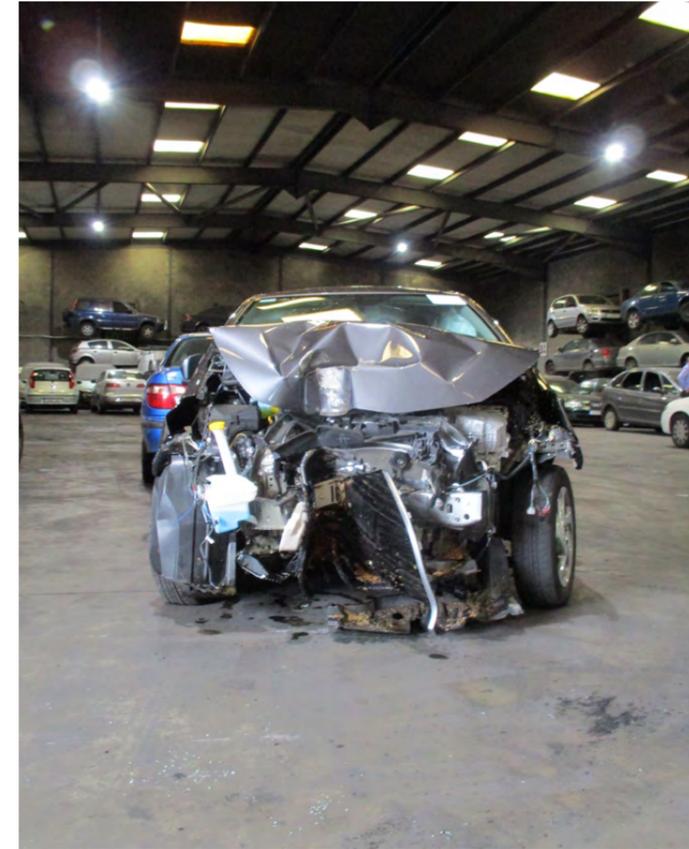
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There was loads of people there, and loads of people knew – my parents, my sisters, one of my sisters was married to a guard, there were nurses in my family. There was a whole range of people who knew and that could have done something to save me, and nobody did anything. That's what this photograph represents – nobody did anything, and nobody checked-in.

Even as I got older and got good at avoiding him, even though I might have been 18, 19, 20 – this man still had that power, and rather than sexual it became nearly psychological. He would come in, shut a door and stand – and you'd nearly be crumbling in front of him, and he knew. The one thing that I'm forever amazed at is how easy it

is for someone to pull you to the ground when you're not expecting it. You can just be landed on your back, and I remember saying to him 'I'm going to tell on you, I'm going to tell on you' and his reaction was 'if you tell anybody, I'll tell them you liked it'.

Those words always stuck in my head – 'If you tell anybody, I'll tell them you liked it'. So there was nearly a question in your own head, would people believe that? You're so confused, you're so full of turmoil. Really as a child you weren't even sure half the time of what was going on, what was happening – loads of confusion, and loads of fear, huge fear.



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For me this just symbolises the effect of child abuse, not just on me, but on family – the impact that it has had on relationships within my family, the damage. Absolutely every relationship in the family. How hard it is to trust people, would be huge for me. Desperately afraid of being judged – so much so that even with a physical illness that I have, I never told the Consultant that I was sexually abused, because I was so afraid of that judgement. It's coming to a point where I'm going to have to say it to her, and I'm desperately afraid of that judgement.

Some people probably didn't survive this wreckage. I hit low points throughout my teenage years and really had nobody to turn to and when I was about twenty I was driving and took a few drinks and was lucky to survive an accident - because the frame of mind I was in, I really didn't care whether I survived it. I had given up, but I'm so glad that I'm here to tell my story. I think that is the effect of abuse – you have your low points, you have your highs, you just find it difficult.



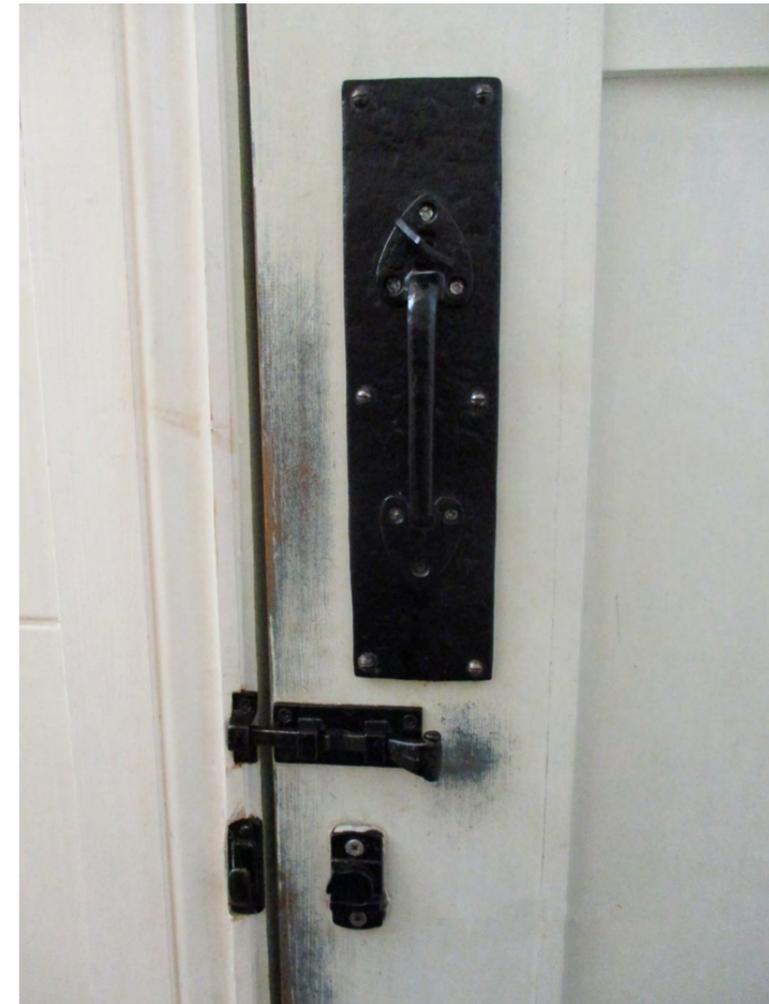
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I think people are often unaware of what abusers are actually like. It rolls off our tongues that people are paedophiles and abusers, but to abuse a child two months before their thirteenth birthday, where I lived in a house where nearly to mention the word 'period' was off-limits. You couldn't even mention it, my mother was very private about periods – everything had to be dignified and you don't talk about that kind of stuff in front of your brothers', in front of your father. To then be abused by my sister's husband, it absolutely changed me – that night I think changed my life forever, I was never the same.

I remember every detail in that room. I remember there were no curtains on the

windows, a street light, there was a moon, it's amazing what I actually remember about that night.

The bin-liner in this photo was used for a reason, because I actually felt dirty, I felt shame and guilt, and I carried that all my life. Hiding behind a career, never feeling I was good enough so much so that I did one nursing course, two nursing courses, three nursing courses. Three qualifications later, nearly to prove to myself that I was good enough, but I still hid behind a career...and I can honestly say that I'm only beginning to feel that I'm a bit real again, that I'm not hiding in the shadows anymore, that I'm not hiding behind a career, hiding behind a mask anymore. Yeah, the effects of being abused.



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I took a picture of this when I was out in a coffee shop, it's a lock on a door. As I got older, the one thing that my brother-in-law used to do was, even when I was twenty, twenty-one, he would come into a room and he almost knew that I would be frozen with fear, he knew he had that control, and I would be frozen with fear. He would shut the door over and lie back against it, so I felt trapped, I felt locked-in.

To a certain extent, in my own head it was like that feeling that I was his, that I had no power, I had no control, and scary and frightening. Even today I'm left with that fear of closed spaces. Recently I hopped into a lift and it didn't open quickly enough and by the time someone came to actually press the button, I was actually on the verge of tears...and that's the effect it leaves you with, that fear of not being able to get out of somewhere quickly.



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When I was sent back to babysit, time after time, when I would get up in the morning I would look at the clock, I never stopped looking at the clock, because this man had control over when I was being brought home. I was constantly clock-watching. Now I realise that the reason I was kept for so long was to monitor how I was, my reaction to being abused.

I used to wonder, why am I here, why isn't he bringing me home, what's this about?. Constantly as a child I was agitated – I had a really agitated, uneasy feeling. I couldn't understand it. Now I actually get it – he was monitoring how I was. As a child I would have had this label on me, 'oh Mary's no bother, she's a quiet child, not an ounce of trouble'. Then as I got older it

developed into 'Mary's a lady, says nothing'. It was like a tag that followed me around – 'no bother', 'lady', when inside I was dying. Not able to express feelings, just totally shut down emotionally. I think that has had an effect on relationships in my life, my marriage, because you're totally closed-down, you're totally shut-off, you can't connect. It's really only now that I'm trying to salvage my relationships, to work on things.

I never felt I was good enough, even questioning whether I was lovable. I just totally thought badly about myself, and now I know that I am enough.



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Animals play a huge part in my life. I've always had a dog and it's just that sense of unconditional love, also the fact that they get you out of that tape-recorder that goes round and round and round in your head because you have to get out and take them for a walk, focus on something different. You get that welcome when you get home. Just really therapeutic and calming – you feel loved for who you are.

I've painted my whole life since a very very early age. When I look back now I actually think it was my way of dealing with what was happening. I was constantly colouring, constantly drawing. I know when I'm painting, that I'm out of my head. Literally, the thoughts are gone and I'm focused on something positive and the day could be gone and I just find it a great distraction. It is a calm and positive force, and I just love it.



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George



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The priest that abused me was also my Latin teacher and he was the sports priest as well. These pictures were taken in Donnybrook, they're roughly 40 years old – I've probably looked at it 10 times in my life. I woke up the next morning after playing this match and it was in the Irish Press – three photos of me running, catching the ball and then scoring a try. I was playing two years younger than my age group and the priest who abused me was in charge of the sport – I actually have no feeling for this whatsoever. The team we played against was Gonzaga and I scored the winning try that day and we played them a few weeks later and I scored the winning try again and six weeks after that I was violently raped by this priest.

So anytime I see these photos it reminds me also of running because I used to run out to training after school, come home and then cycle up to training so I was always running. I don't think I've ever stopped running in my life, away from these things. But this picture, not many people have seen it – there's three pictures altogether but I can never look at the third one, it's the one where I scored the try and after

that the match ended. The priest was in the third photograph so I couldn't really look at it. It's very poignant to me because it represents me running for my life and trying not to be caught – and I was caught, very aggressively.

My youngest daughter, she's 18 – when she used to see black and white photos she thought they were black and white days, and it's a brilliant sentence because to me they were the black and white days where priests ruled everything. The priest that did it to me is now dead but the leader of that particular order, I met them in this very room [in One in Four] it was just as if 'that's it, thanks very much' after I explained what happened to me. I think I was talking for about 20 minutes and they said, 'ok are we finished now?'. To me that just sums up the torment over the years.

These pictures, to me they represent a lot of things – but also, if you could just stop this picture and not let the next few months happen it would have been different.



© George | 2018 | I am One in Four

I find this picture fascinating, I took this in Farmleigh. This sprang out at me. It was a beautiful day, I was walking through Farmleigh and I saw this steeple as such. I looked at it and I wondered, do you ever notice how the churches in Dublin, their steeples are so tall because they want to dominate society.

In the first photograph the steeple is fairly prominent, and the second one the trees are growing up around it. Hopefully those trees represent us.



© George | 2018 | I am One in Four

Oddly this is a gate right beside the steeple and this represents a no-go-area, keep out. It was just out of the blue, to see the power of the trauma. I pushed it away for thirty years, you push it so far back and then these little things, seeing a steeple in the distance, are overpowering, and getting back to the priest at the rugby match.... it's the power they had, even in school. We were taught Latin, who was taught Latin? And we had to rhyme all the verbs off and in those days there was pretty bad corporal punishment – we had the strap and I remember this particular priest, he was sadistic. He took a great happiness in completely making you feel useless in front of a class thirty people.

More so in front of the whole school – in the morning he'd be waiting as you came through the archway and if you weren't there by a certain time he'd pick out six, seven boys and he'd line up the whole school and it was like a concentration camp. He'd administer his discipline in front of the whole school – a leather strap and six of the best on each, and if you moaned he'd give you another two.

It was the whole environment - the sexual abuse and the corporal punishment, you couldn't ask anybody for help, you couldn't tell anybody. You're locked in, you're trapped. That's what this photograph portrayed to me.



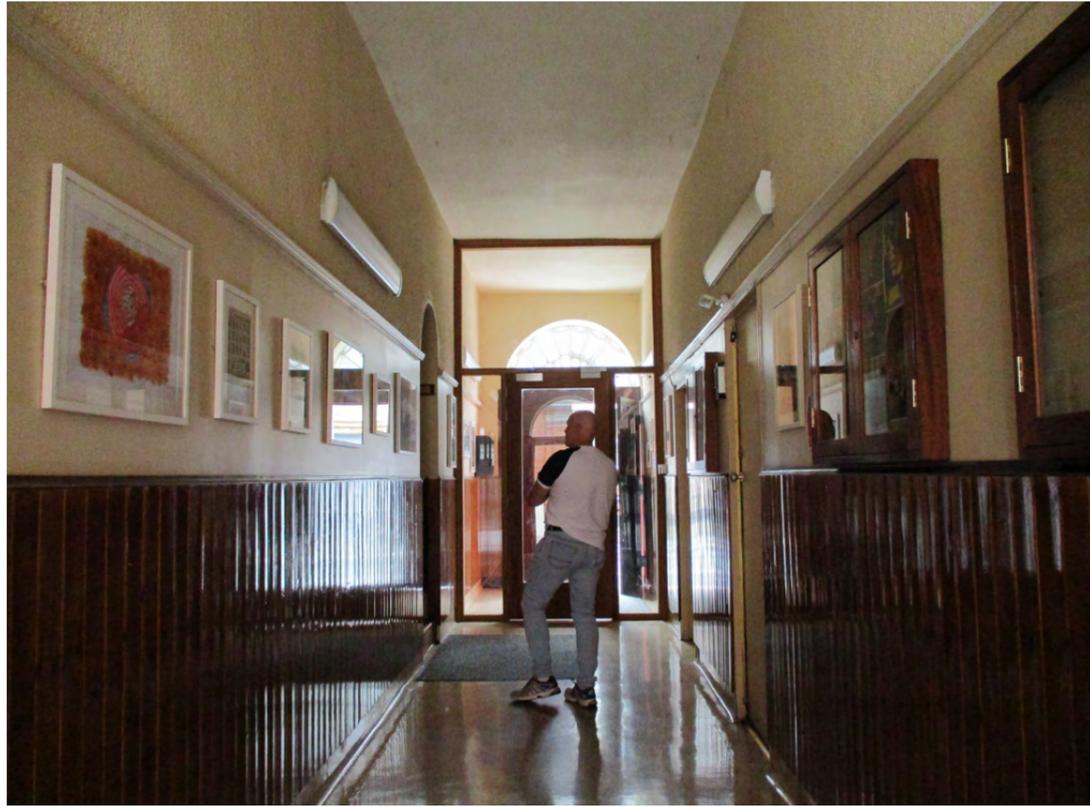
© George | 2018 | I am One in Four

This is a photograph of the Battle of Rorke's Drift. When I was a kid I went to see the film of it, Zulu – you know when you're a kid you've no political views, I was just watching this, the brilliant Red versus the 'savages'. In this battle, they were outnumbered, it was a medical unit – and previous to this there was a massacre and the Zulu came upon this medical centre and wanted to destroy it. The whole thing of this was the strategic plan... their strategy was four-squares back-to-back. They were shooting back to back and they only had a one-bullet rifle, so they had to keep reloading and they'd use this manoeuvre... and I remember thinking as a kid it's a wonderful manoeuvre.

Anyway move on a couple of years and when the most brutal abuse took place, it was quite violent and he had his hands around my neck and I actually blanked out. When it was all over and I was still alive I remember leaving his room, I was still in the school and I went down to the toilets and when I was there another priest came in and he started cursing and told me to get the hell out and this picture came into my

mind, of survival. I actually manoeuvred my way up beside the church in my school, back to where the priest had abused me, back by a science lab and I went through the laneway and this was always in my mind and even now I still use 'fighting at four corners', fighting everybody. When you have enough energy you can do it.

They lost very few men at this particular battle and I just remember saying that when things get bad and pretty low, use this procedure. I know it's a very unusual thing, but the procedure for me has worked, at a particular time when I was fighting at all four fronts. I wouldn't say living, but surviving. I just like the manoeuvre and it's funny, nothing political about it whatsoever it was just the strength... It wasn't until this year that I've had positive thinking, it's been pretty negative over the years, but that was one of the positive things I had in my life, to survive. It's something that you just hold on to. When you're at a low ebb and you're just hanging on for something, it's always been there. I always think, just don't give up – even if you're down to your last three or four men. Just keep going.



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It always used to scare me walking down this hall. He'd be waiting for you. Every morning you'd have to be in there by nine o'clock and this was like a tunnel. The minute you'd leave the public road and come in here you'd be at their mercy. You'd just do anything to try to survive. You stop learning, you don't want to learn, you can't learn. You just try to get through the day.

How could one priest do that and others not know about it? I got the impression that they always knew. This reminds me of going through a time barrier where the minute you go through a hall and you come out through a gate and you know you have to turn into a different person.

Going back to the school, I couldn't believe the effect – I was on a high coming out. My therapist always taught me about fear, to imagine myself as a child in a bubble, a bubble where no one can get in but you. When I went back I closed my eyes for a minute, maybe more, and I imagined young George and I took him out of that hall with me. So that's what I got out of going back to the school – I was on a high for days afterwards. I know it's funny, but I just felt young George was with me.

I'll never forgive and I'll never forget, but now I can deal with it. I'm tired of fighting, I'm tired of running. I can't fight an invisible thing.



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This photo represents a point in time where destiny decides if you live or die. I spent a lot of time on my grandad's farm, I loved it and my uncle also had a farm in Meath and we went down a good bit. We'd particularly help with the hay. He'd let me drive his 1960s VW pick-up, that was my first driving experience. Back to fate – after two over-doses which I survived, I got to the lowest and loneliest point in my life, the last post. It really was the lowest point I was ever at in my life. I remember going for a run in the Phoenix Park and I decided I'd finish my run by jumping in front of a car – I remember the night

so well. When I got to the gate, I looked out and the first car I let go. So I said right I'll let one car go and then I'll be ready to go for the next one. So I said the next car I'll get ready and I saw the car coming in the distance and I hid in the gate so that when the car was near I could just jump before he could stop. At that moment I took a look up to see what it was and it was a VW pick-up – the same colour blue as my uncles. It just stopped me for a minute, and I ran back home. It passed, that moment – that moment for me was just a miracle.

Sarah



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For a long time I was I was very confused about what I experienced as a child. When I began to try to explore it through photovoice, the first thing I was drawn to was pools of muddy water. I knew on one level that the environment I grew up in was toxic and abusive, but I was in a lot of denial and tended to focus more on the idea that despite the bad parts, there was good too. The bad parts were normalised and minimised by everyone around me, to the point where I normalised and minimised them too. I have achieved elements of 'success' in life so how bad can it have been? But something wasn't right – as an adult I felt like I was walking around with a

gaping wound – but that I couldn't really get a handle on it or feel it properly at an emotional level. I was completely disconnected from the pain, the physical and emotional manifestations of my trauma. Years of silence, secrets and lies meant I couldn't fully 'see' myself. My lack of understanding of the impact of trauma on your body and your soul meant I thought my traumatic responses – hyper-vigilance, fear, anxiety, lack of confidence and trust in myself, my inability to leave toxic shitty situations was just my personality, a series of personal failings rather than a predictable pattern of responses to being assaulted and terrorised as a child.



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Cutting through the confusion of the muddy water, when I began to take photos that represented what my childhood felt like, this is the image that immediately came to mind. I was born into a toxic cess-pit of addictions, secrets, lies, abuse and violence of all kinds. It was a terrifying place for a child, there was no safe

place, physically or emotionally. On top of the violence and trauma, the fact that it was normalised added another layer of pain onto things. I was fed a lot of bullshit as a child, and as an adult, and it's taken me a long time to see the reality of things.

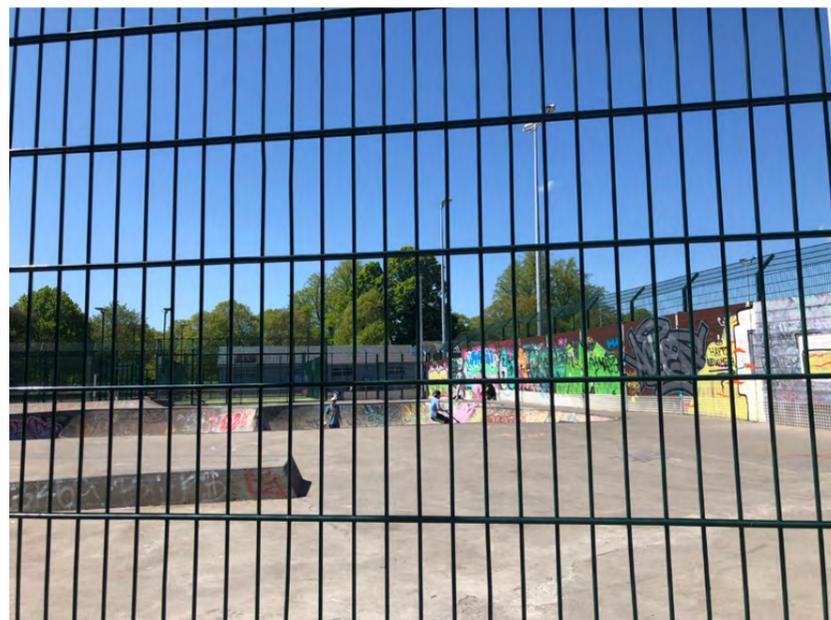


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These photos represent the isolation and loneliness I felt as a child. When you have secrets that you can't share with anyone, you feel completely alone, you can't fully participate in life, you can't easily make healthy connections with others. I thought that I was the only person who was experiencing what I was experiencing. I was also kept in a lot as a child, who I was allowed play with, where I was allowed to go was all very tightly controlled. It meant I felt very isolated and deeply lonely. It was like there was no one I could confide in, and I internalised the guilt and shame of those who abused me. I kept their secrets. It made me very quiet as a child, I felt completely silenced.



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I hate this word. It's the word that was used in our home to describe my mother, my sisters, me, women in general. I came to know fairly early in life that women were the enemy of men – almost biblical in their ability to ruin a man's life. Women were second class citizens, there to serve, to keep their opinions to themselves, to be silent. The misogyny, the toxic masculinity, ran deep in our home. Everything feminine was derided, considered less-than. Female sexuality had to be hidden, covered-up, not spoken about. It's like it was a powerful force to be feared.

To this day I can't bring myself to say this word out loud, it's like the most beautiful thing has been turned into something so harsh and violent – the worst thing you could call someone. I suppose by writing it out in flower petals there's some effort here to reclaim it, or make it beautiful again. I love being a woman, reclaiming the idea that being a woman is not 'less-than' has been really important to me. Reclaiming my feminine power and feeling proud of my body, my sexuality has been an integral part of my healing process.



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In terms of the impact of the sexual violence, coupled with the various other forms of violence meted out to me as a child, this photo captures the visceral nature of what it felt like. I feel like part of me was torn out, demolished, trampled over. It's like someone shooting you in your chest at short range. The difficult part is that the wounds are invisible – they're there in the free-floating fear and anxiety that seem to be constant companions, and in the dysfunctional coping methods that you adopt to get through life with part of you missing, but it's very hard to treat a wound that is invisible. Where its tentacles begin and end can be a mystery.

One of the worst impacts of my experience is that it makes you doubt yourself. When someone crosses such a fundamental and sacred boundary on you as a child, but tells you it's your fault, or that it's not wrong, it makes you lose trust in your own internal compass. For a long time I felt like my compass was broken – like my gut instincts, intuition were faulty. This meant if something felt bad, a relationship, a job, whatever, I'd stay in it anyway, it leaves you wide open for manipulation. Your self-confidence and self-esteem takes such a hammering. You end up in a cycle of repeating old dysfunctional patterns which are based on not trusting your feelings. What I realise now is that it's not that my compass is broken, it's the ability to trust it that was severely damaged. My internal compass is on the mark, it always has been – my feelings don't lie. But it takes a lot of time, patience and self-compassion to try to gently trust them again.



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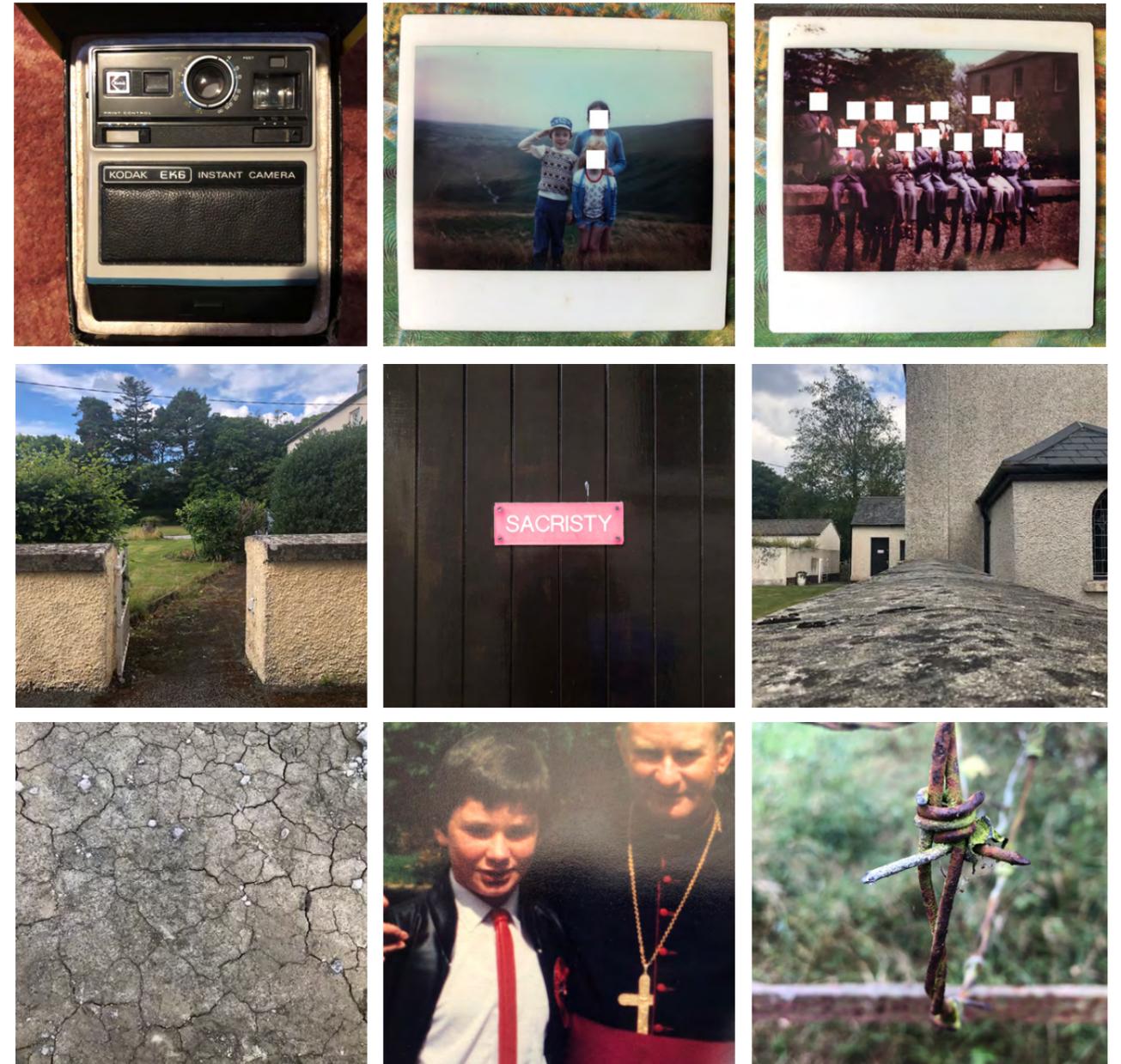
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Finding my tribe has been a key part of my healing process. Creating strong, healthy bonds with wonderful people who see and hear you, who are walking a healing path themselves is fundamental to me. When you're born into a situation that is toxic, eventually you have to walk away and find a new group to call your family. It's a painful but ultimately liberating process. You have to learn how to make healthy connections, you have to learn what healthy boundaries and open-hearted, unconditional love looks and feels like. It's like you've to learn all of that from scratch, you've got no template to work off. The

support of others who are willing to patiently walk with you, offering you that unconditional love and support is the ultimate healer for me.

Yoga and therapy have been life-changing, as has the ability to do meaningful work which feeds and heals my soul. If there's a gift that growing up in violence and abuse has given me, it's that I don't take my life, my freedom for granted. It's important for me to live my best life, I endured years of torture and have no intention of enduring life any more, of merely surviving - I want to live it fully, to thrive.

Patrick



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I am 8

I am 8 years old,
 My cassock and surplice
 Unfolded in my Quinnsworth bag,
 Swing by my side.
 The handles twisted tight
 Turning my fingers blue.

Pain is relative
 When your heart's on fire.

I am waiting for him to come.
 I am waiting for him to collect me.

I am 8 years old.
 It's a sunny Saturday.
 His car pulls into my drive
 And my parents reverentially
 And metaphorically bow before him.

Would they have known what he would do
 Would they have passed me over?
 When finally they knew
 They did pass me over.

I am 8 years old.
 I am in his study
 And even though he could overpower me,
 He invites me to sit on his knee,
 The bribe by his side.

Calculating and warm
 He seduces me.
 The 8 year old boy.

I am 8 years old.
 He holds my hand around his hard penis,
 His eyes rolling and his breath
 Dark on my neck.

It is only then he brings strength to bear.
 His hands chain me to him,
 His breath, warm and cold
 Flowing across my skin.

I am 8 years old.
 When he drops me home
 He rolls his window down
 And waves to my father,

"Thank you Father!"
 "You're very welcome."

I am 8 years old.
 And surely in my eyes,
 In my silence, there was enough pain
 For a father and a mother to see.

I am 8 years old and I am alone,
 Sentenced to a lifetime of smelling him,
 Of hearing my father thank him
 For looking after me.

Oh how he looked after me father.
 Oh how.

Secret*Secret:*

Not known or seen or not meant to be known or seen by others.
According to the dictionary of Oxford

Secret:

Known, seen, covered up, denied, denied.

According to the holy roman church,
According to the archdiocese of Dublin,
According to the parish of Valleymount.

The first secret of Valleymount.

What is a secret if it is not known?
A secret is always known.
Knowledge is the root of all secrets.

A secret of one.
A secret of two.
A secret of many.

The first secret of Valleymount.
Thomas Naughton.
Or more precisely his predilection
For pre-pubescent boys

Is it a secret if we know and deny?
Is it a secret if we collude with silence?

Silence is not not knowing
Silence is a deliberate action
Silence is a decision to say nothing
Silence is a decision to do nothing
There is power in silence
And human agency

In silences dwell dark secrets

The second secret of Valleymount

It was never a secret.

Fathers knew.
Mothers knew.
The waters rippled to the whispered truth.

Let us look at the not meant to be part
Of the definition from Oxford .

It was not meant to be known.
It was not meant to be known.

Since when in all ages,
In the days of our human lives
Has the sexual brutalisation, rape and torture
Of children not meant to be known?

And if you knew?
Even if you were meant not to know
What shame stilled your heart?

The third secret of Valleymount

Others.
Oh, others.

What would others think?
Of their boys?
Abused, dirtied, lessened in their eyes.
If others knew nothing, nothing would be.

Others.
What care of others if the secret was washed from their hands?

The fourth secret of Valleymount

A secret is only as safe as its weakest participant
Yes. Secrets need dedicated participants.
Disciples. Apostles. Priests.

I am your weakest link. Valleymount.
I am your secret.
I am, the wish you never knew of Tom Naughton.

When he thrust the hands of young boys
Down his trousers
And forced their fingers to grasp his hot penis
He tenderised those young boys

When he ravaged them in the sacristy
And you heard screams
What made you believe the screams
To be of fun and laughter?

What pleasure he must have gained?
In the brazenness of saying Mass
And placing the host in your mouths
With his unwashed hands.

The fifth secret of Vallemount

You are as sick as your worst secret.
Explicit.

stated clearly and in detail, leaving no room for confusion or doubt.

(Oxford again)

Let me be explicit.

(It is strange that the word explicit is filled with negative connotations.
Many sexual.)

Let me be explicit.
This is my explicit truth.

The sexual torture of young boys in the roman catholic parish of Vallemount,
in the county of Wicklow in the archdiocese of Dublin in the country of
Ireland in the early 1980's was not a secret.

The torture was an individual decision.
The silence was not.
The secret was not.

The denial was deliberate.
The cover up was deliberate.

The moving on of him was a conscious decision
Without any objection.

You should fall to your knees,
In front of the men of Donnycarney
And Ringsend,
In front of Mervyn Rundle,
You should fall to your knees.

For you knew what was sent their way
There was no secret

Just a paedophile
With the power of the silence in his back pocket.

I Carved My Name

This is the story
Of a small village in Wicklow
In the early 1980's.

The local curate
was 'fond of the boys',
Liked a bit of 'horseplay'.

Let me elaborate;

He liked to force them to masturbate him
In the sacristy.
He liked to fondle their 7 year old genitals.
He liked to dig his wiry hands into their arms
As he trapped them on his knees
Atop his hard penis.

The veins would rise on his forehead
And his breath would deepen.
The door into the church
would always remain open.

The audacity of the paedophile.

He ran through boys
As floodwaters down Mullaghcleevaun.

This is the story
Of a small village in Wicklow
In the early 1980's.

Suspicious were raised,
Fathers and mothers whispered silently
To young boys,
On tractors,
In fields.
Across cold bedrooms
Whispers melted into silence.

The parish priest was asked to move him
By the local Garda.
The bishop was informed.
(Thank you Murray, Donal for doing fuck all)
And then he was gone.

But you can't unplough a field

This is the story
Of a small village in Wicklow
In the early 1980's.

It would take years
For the damage to seep to the surface
Cultivated by silence and ignorance.

I carved my name in a tree
(Using the pen-knife of the late Jimmy Byrne
that my uncle gave me in the 1980's.)

When I went back to look for it,
twenty years later, it was gone.

Somewhere beneath the bark of a tree,
On the edge of the lake
Lies my name,
Patrick Bolger.

Thomas Naughton
Carved his name into my 7 year old skin
In the 1980's.

When I go back to look for it,
All these years later,
It is there.
I can feel it,
Great knots of hurt
With no way out.

Somewhere beneath my skin
On the edge of my heart,
Lies his name.
Thomas Naughton.

This is the story
Of a small village in Wicklow
In the early 1980's.

This is the story
Of a small village in Wicklow
Today.

There are men,
In their 40's.
Great strong men
Farmers and builders and artists,

Carrying beneath their barks,
On the edge of the lake
The carved hurt left by him.

There are men,
Dead,
Whose skin could no longer hide his name.

His name was Thomas Naughton



I am 45

I am 45 years old,
 I see you
 I see your pain.
 As I stand beside you
 On the battlefield
 Where I left you.

All those years gone by.

I see your tears
 Falling you to sleep at night.

I see your aloneness
 See the shame seeping from you.
 You are naked
 Save for your cloak of guilt.

I am 45 years old
 I am here to see you.
 I am here to bear witness
 To your torture.

I am 45 years old,
 I left you alone,
 To be webbed in silence
 And secrets.

I want to hold your hand.
 I want to hold your hand.

I want to wipe gently
 The tears from your soft cheek.
 I want to whisper in your ear,

I am here.
 Whisper love,
 I am here.
 I want to wrap you
 Into my arms,
 Cloth you with compassion
 Armour you with love.

I am 45 years old.
 I am you
 You are me.

I am standing in your battlefield,
 Knee deep in the shit
 And the mud
 And the shame
 And the guilt
 And the silence.

I look into your eyes
 Little boy,
 I look into my eyes,
 We are alone
 But we are together.
 Take my hand.
 We will never walk apart
 Again.

I am 45 years old.
 I feel our tears
 Falling us to sleep at night.

Eva



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This is the group room in St. Patrick's and I go there on Monday's to a compassion-focused therapy group. I've never disclosed anything about my abuse in any of these groups but I've been in groups with hundreds of people. I'd say the first group therapy I took part in was when I was about 15. I was sexually attacked when I was 15 and sent to St. John of God's for quite a while. So I guess looking at the room kind of reminded me of how much work I've done.

I know from looking back over my medical records...I was first evaluated by a psychiatrist when I was 3 or 4, nothing came of it. From when I was very young I was presenting in hospital for 'failure to thrive', I wasn't eating, I wasn't meeting my developmental milestones. I'm older now and from when I was a teen in St. John of God's I've never really stopped trying to get help.

Coming to One in Four has been great but getting to come here was quite a lot of work. It was maybe a year and a half of phoning every few weeks before I got a place. It's kind of been the same for everything, it's just really hard work. The group meetings are really important to me and it's important to me to acknowledge that I keep trying things and keep taking the parts of the therapies that help me and nurture me, and make me stronger and keep going, because I know I've had suicidal ideation for a ridiculous amount of time. I always assumed that some day I would just eventually die because I couldn't cope with it anymore, and I always wanted to know that when I got to that point that I had done everything. If that meant coming here, telling doctors, I've spent at least 3 years as an inpatient in psychiatric institutions. I haven't had an admission since 2015, but that was probably the worst I've ever had – there was none of me left.



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I guess it's pretty obvious this looks like a labia. When I was a child, the first time I ever self-harmed when I was about 5 and I took a scissors to my privates, to try to get rid of it, because it wasn't mine. It hurt, which is why [I've included] the insects - kind of that sense of not belonging. It just didn't feel like part of my body. I used to get in trouble – I used to get multiple infections that got treated quite a lot.

The amount of pain was ridiculous. I didn't know it wasn't usual, I didn't know it wasn't normal. I couldn't sit with my legs together so being a little girl in the 80s wearing her little 80s clothes, I used to sit with my legs spread apart. I didn't know that having my legs close together and it hurting [wasn't normal] – I just thought it was one of those things, I thought it was perfectly normal, this is just what happens when you

sit with your legs close together. I'm really into crafts, so I have all these ribbons and beads around the house. It's something that could have been beautiful.

It doesn't feel like that anymore, it feels like it's part of my body now, but the confusion around it all, I didn't understand – I used not to be able to connect the dots and I didn't have the language or the experience, because I was tiny. I didn't know what ejaculate was, and I didn't know what it was when it was coming out of me, so the first few times that that happened, that I was consciously aware of that happening, I didn't think it was anything weird.

So this picture represents the pain and the feeling of this not being biologically part of me.



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When I was a kid my abuser passed away, I don't know what would have happened if he hadn't. For years when I was a kid, particularly at night-time because I got very scared at night-time – I still get very scared at night-time – when I'd be lying in bed trying to fall asleep and my mind would be wandering and I'd get just snagged on something that didn't fit-in. Like the wrong puzzle piece mixed into a puzzle, it would catch my attention and when I directed my thoughts towards it I used to feel like someone had sprayed perfume in my eyes. I used to describe it as lemon thoughts – it used to feel like I had bitten into a lemon, my entire body would just rebel – it felt like an electric shock and I wouldn't be able to think about it. I couldn't physically think about it. It upset me a lot as a kid. The bread is mouldy to add a bit of disgust to it, because that's how my body felt. I still have that reaction to some of the more intricate details of my abuse.

The vast majority of this went away after I was attacked in my teens. Sometimes I think if I hadn't been raped, and I was violently raped,

in my teens, maybe I would have been one of those people that doesn't really remember anything about their abuse properly and I would have been messed-up the way people are messed-up, and suffer from depression and things. But that was like my electro-convulsive therapy - getting raped at that point in my development because it just stopped, all of this stopped. It all started flooding back.

My teens were brutally hellish because that defence was lost. Whatever my brain was trying to do to protect me when I was young just stopped working which is when my self-harm began – it was my way of imitating whatever my brain was trying to do. Self-harm worked really well at shutting it up, and then I developed quite severe disassociation as the years went on. I don't know if what I call 'lemon thoughts' are technically disassociation, but normally after I've had a flashback, particularly, my brain just stops completely. I always describe it as the blue screen of death – like a windows computer safety mode, you can't access all of the files.



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I was getting ready to go to a wedding at the weekend...I spent like a week trying to think about everything that could potentially go wrong at the wedding. It's just something I've done for years, I talked about it with the group I see on Mondays – it's a compassion-focused group, and I'm nicer to myself about it now, but I can't frickin leave my house half the time – I'm much better now, without having food that will get me through a couple of days, multiple first aid kits, multiple days' worth of my medication, rain-coats, swiss army knives. Insane amounts of planning, days of clothes and it's regularly, when I'm not even going to a wedding, it's like just going to the shops I'll bring spare clothes just in case because I'm scared like all the time, and this is how it manifests, to protect myself.

I have an awful lot of 'what if' and 'if only's' that manifest in this kind of stuff as well which over the years, even though you can't blame yourself there's always a 'what if I had done this?'; 'what if I had been wearing a tampon?'; 'what if when I was a child I 'somethinged' and that would have made it different?'

Trying to leave the house with anxiety, what if something happens and I didn't bring...lavender oil! Or what if I get on the bus and somebody looks like somebody that raped me and I start freaking the fuck out and I haven't brought spare Xanax, or that cream that helps ground me when I'm panicking and stops me from having flashbacks. It's just so much fucking work all the time.

1. Wanting others to be kind to oneself is a weakness.
2.. I fear that when I need people to be kind and understanding they wont be.
3. I'm fearful of becoming dependent on the care from others because they might not always be available or willing to give it.
4. I often wonder whether displays of warmth and kindness from others are genuine.
5. Feelings of kindness from others are somehow frightening.
6. When people are kind and compassionate towards me I feel anxious or embarrassed.
7. If people are friendly and kind I worry they will find out something bad about me that will change their mind.
8. I worry that people are only kind and compassionate if they want something from me.
9. When people are kind and compassionate towards me I feel empty and sad.
10. If people are kind I feel they are getting too close.
11. Even though other people are kind to me, I have rarely felt warmth from my relationships with others.
12. I try to keep my distance from others even if I know they are kind.
13. If I think someone is being kind and caring towards me, I 'put up a barrier'.

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I just finished a six month compassion-focused therapy group, and psychologists, I think they're required to, but they fucking love scales. Zero to ten, one to five, 'never', 'always'. This is one specifically for self-compassion, how you see yourself in relation to others and I did this scale back in February and then filled it back out on Monday morning. The first time and the second time, this particular page in it hit me quite hard both times because one of the things that confused me from when I was kind of in my teens and I was better able to start seeing myself and how I related to other people, was when people were nice to me I got very unsettled.

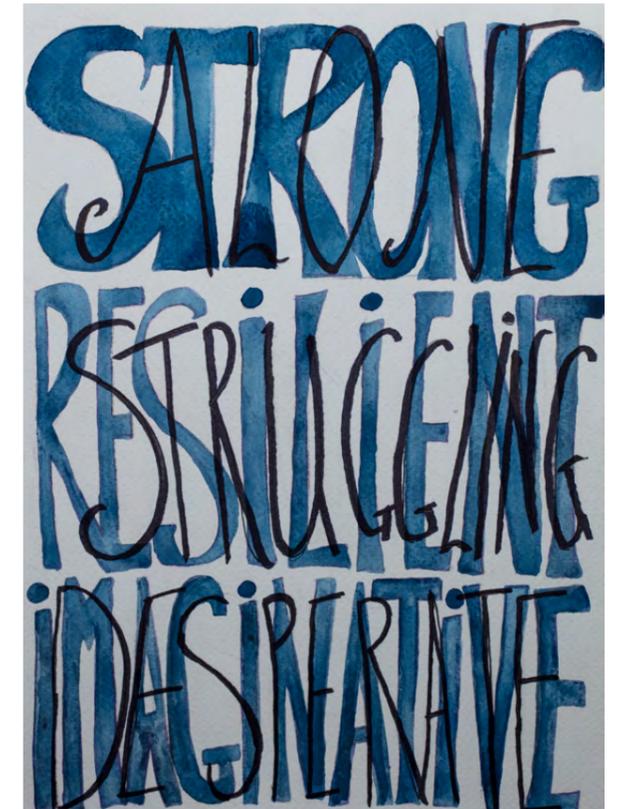
People showing genuine concern, or especially if I was anxious or nervous, people being kind. Sometimes it could make me burst into tears, if someone said something nice to me.

So every-time I've seen this particular part of the scale, all of them are – I'm way better now than I was, and I'm way better than I was at the beginning, even back in February when I started this group – but I'm so suspicious of people. All of the worst things that have ever happened to me have been because of people, and because of my experiences growing up as a child, I haven't been capable of giving people the opportunity to be kind. I also haven't made close connections with an awful lot of people where they could have disproved this stuff that I learnt as a child. So I loved animals and nature and things – things were way more trustworthy than people.

It's kind of double-sided for me. One of the things people say an awful lot is oh you're so strong, you're so resilient, or you're so imaginative or creative and sometimes it comes across as being told to shut-up. It's like telling someone that's just had their leg cut off after they've swam across an ocean after their ship sank, 'weren't you great to swim though, you're so lucky you made it!' – and it's like, no my fucking boat sank and my leg's gone, like what the fuck, fix something! Stop telling me I'm strong. I shouldn't have had to have been. So being told you're strong, you're resilient or you're imaginative or creative to me, the reasons why I'm that I shouldn't have had to be because that's why I'm alone, struggling and desperate. If I hadn't been alone I wouldn't be strong in the way that people think in a clap-you-on-the-back sort of way and resilience is surviving shit over and over and over and over again, or being able to bend back into shape without snapping. That's not a nice thing to have to go through, that's something shit has happened a lot.

Desperation and imagination – I don't know if the way that my mind works that's positively creative and the way it works where it can become almost problematically imaginative in an escapist way. Certainly the escapism wouldn't have existed if I hadn't felt trapped – and the creative problem-solving wouldn't have happened if I wasn't a young child trying to figure shit out by myself. So the only way I had of escaping, it was only pure desperation that I became so imaginative because it was the only means of escape.

I sometimes feel that when people say that you are strong or resilient or imaginative in response to – brave is another one, you're so brave – it's like putting a full-stop at the end of it. Abuse doesn't stop when the abuse stops, because, it's like the compassion thing, for the rest of your life



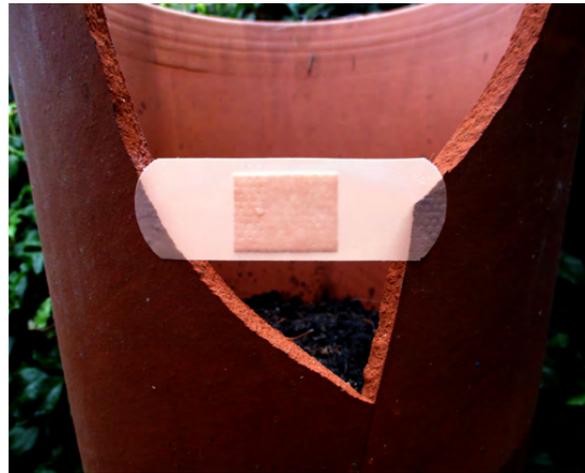
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you're still coming up against stuff that has something to do with it. It's an ongoing process, getting stressed out and not being able to leave your house for several weeks is an ongoing process.

For myself, abuse ongoing-wise, in 2015 I found photographs of myself being abused, quite graphic photographs of myself being abused and I haven't been able to do photographs since – I don't like people taking photographs of me. So it is one of those things that it doesn't necessarily stop.

The energy, perhaps the energy in your life could have gone somewhere else, could have taken a different shape.

I'm kind of in love with my poor broken pot, it's kind of comical trying to fix it with that band-aid. This reflects my experiences with the public healthcare system in Ireland. It costs a lot of money to see private psychiatrists and stuff, but it was around the time of the photographs and I needed help, frickin right now. I went back to the public health services and I had already been previously diagnosed – I didn't tell them that – but within twenty minutes they [the trainee doctors] had me diagnosed with PTSD and they were like 'have you ever heard of it', and I was like 'yeah I have' and I'd say about five minutes later the actual psychiatrist came in and he was like, yes you meet all the symptoms and he said 'have you tried not thinking about it?' and I really wanted to say 'it's called post-traumatic stress disorder!..one of the symptoms is really recurrent intrusive thoughts, are you joking!?' Every time I go to hospital I get very agitated and upset when people do things to my body that I don't feel I can make a decision to stop, and medical procedures are really hard for me because of that. Having to explain over and over and over and over again to people who have no fucking idea. Having to disclose that I was abused, or even that I have a history of sexual trauma and I get very agitated if people don't give me space -that's upsetting every time, and obviously puts my mind in that setting. How often they say yeah yeah and I say 'but I need you to hear me.. if I ask you to stop I'm not telling you that you can't keep going, I'm just saying stop for a few seconds, let me remember where I am, catch my breath and then you can keep going' and it's generally, consistently across the board, ignored. I say 'I need you to stop now' and they say 'no it's just a few more minutes' – they're sticking tubes in and stuff and I lose the fucking plot and then I get given out to afterwards for having flashbacks in the middle of procedures and stuff.



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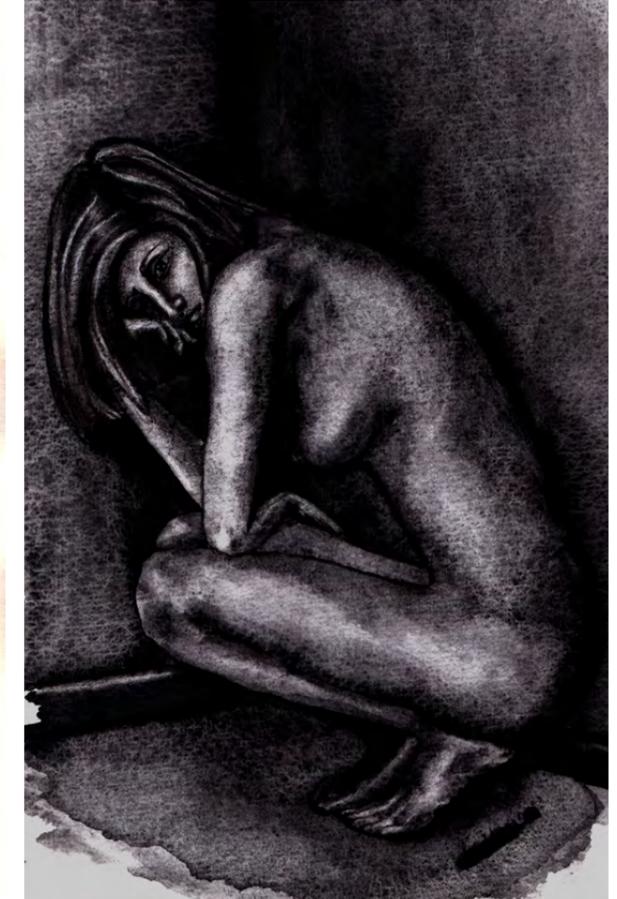
The reason it's a band-aid is that I feel it's about as much care as is willing to be put into the extra needs of somebody with my own history of trauma. I've had problems with my legs and when I've gone into hospital or gone into doctors and gone for procedures, or had casts on or had my limp, where I had mobility problems, I had special bars to protect me when I walked, I wasn't able to pee without ringing a bell to make sure I wasn't going to fall. So they are very aware of that [physical need] – it wouldn't be that much more effort to be aware of trauma and to provide a little bit more care around it and a little less obliviousness because it's very annoying. I've had it with gynaecologists too, all kinds of people who should be way more up on that kind of stuff.



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These are paintings that I've done over the years about my trauma. The first one is called The Soul Thief. This is something that I've done since I was very young, drawings of the whole core of someone being missing, or of them being gone from the waist down, is something that I've done a lot. That kind of disconnect from, that severing from yourself, or not feeling that you have all of yourself. I kind of joke about humpty dumpty never being put back together again and I never had any Kings' horses, or Kings' men to even attempt to put me back together.

I did the second painting while I was in hospital



after the photograph thing and I called it Grey Ache. It was about that grey ache feeling that zero anything, empty, depression was about as human as I got for quite a long time afterwards. It felt like I just kept waking up out of my head. It was the worst disassociation that I've ever had in my life, or else I'd be having really bad back to back flashbacks where I couldn't think and I was very much back as a child, terrified. Or else I'd be having nightmares all night, and every now and then I'd be me but with all the colour gone, not quite aware of what was going on around me and just drained and tired.

Frank



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This was a point in my life when I didn't know what happened to me. I didn't have any anxiety or panic attacks at this stage, so this is when I was very happy.

That's my first car, I used to travel around Ireland – down in Tramore. A lot of these photographs

are about travelling, because I used to love travelling when I was young. Then in my late 20s I got my first panic attack and I didn't know why – I was taken into hospital, I thought there was something else wrong with me, but there was nothing wrong with me, it was purely psychological.



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That's me travelling round for a big company I used to work for, for fifteen years. I used to do presentations all over the world for them. Again, I had to start pulling back from that because I started getting panic attacks on planes – and this was not because of childhood sexual abuse, but because I was locked up in that room so many times, and they would never let me out of the room. When you get a panic attack it's not about where you are now, it's linked back to what happened – your body is going back to that particular point. This was when I was free to travel all over the world, these were very good times.

All the lost opportunities. There've been lots of losses, even my kids when they were young I wasn't able to hug them because of things that had happened to me from a sexual nature, you'd be afraid to do that kind of stuff.

I'm able to open up about it because I've had a lot of counselling, One in Four have been very good to me. It helped me to understand an



awful lot of things. It's only through coming to One in Four that I understood there's a direct link back to what happened and the panic attacks – the body remembers what the mind forgets. It's not the airplane – the minute the door locks you are back to being eight or nine years of age, with the door being locked. It's about understanding things and how things happen.

I know I'll never get justice, but the past is the past, you just have to make your own life better. As somebody said to me once, making yourself better is the best revenge, don't let it get you down and be the best person you can be. As an eight-year-old child I did nothing wrong, the results are the results – the best you can do is get better, not bitter.

All these photographs are about the thing I love most, travelling. My dream now is to visit Morgan Freeman's bar in Clarksdale Mississippi, to fly over and ride to it on a Harley Davidson. That's my goal, to do that.



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That's me at 14 years of age, travelling around Europe with the Scouts. We went for two weeks from Ireland on two buses. Unfortunately, the guy beside me, was my best childhood friend and he was in the same De La Salle school with me and he died at the age of 31, so he's gone now as well. I used to collect money for the school, a subscription, and you'd go in on Saturday morning and to take the money off you the brothers would bring you to this room and give you sweets. They'd lure you into the room for sweets and then the door would lock behind you and that's when you'd be locked in. So that's what went on.



Travelling was one of the biggest things for me, I used to love it. What happens in your life, it's probably different for everybody, but the things you enjoy the most are taken away from you when these things happen to you. I think that's what happened to me. I haven't flown in an airplane for nearly 18 years. I was taken off an airplane and was taken to hospital because I went into a complete shutdown. Now I'm working on it, I got therapy in St. Patricks' I've been doing exposure therapy and I can get into lifts now and I'm not as bad at being in locked-up places. My final place will certainly be on an airplane. I'm certainly going to do that soon.



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This building, it's ironic, it's only about 100 feet around the corner from One in Four. I left home at fifteen years of age and that's where I lived from fifteen to my mid-twenties. I go back to the building every now and again because I had a great time there. It's derelict now for the past 35 years – it's been derelict since I left it.

When I go back to the building, for some unknown reason I've a great feeling – I've a lovely warm feeling when I walk around the place, it was a brilliant time when I lived there. I didn't know about what happened to me at the time, I just knew that I had a bit of anxiety, but a lot of that stuff didn't come until later on in life. It was a lovely quiet place to live, it's a beautiful Georgian building. I lived on the top floor, and it's strange and ironic, that here I am 40 years later just around the corner in One in Four. I chose this photograph because this was the happiest ten years of my life. I left home at 15, why did I leave home at 15? - my therapists says Frank, you left home to protect yourself. I became independent very very young. Living on my own. It was an absolutely beautiful place to live and it was very quiet and peaceful.

How the abuse affected me, I would have done very well in the band but I couldn't travel – couldn't do gigs over in the UK or anything like that, so I was restricted to playing here. It's how this thing affected me and how it's restricted my life but having said that I still consider myself to be very lucky because I found ways around things, did other things. I found music was very therapeutic.



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Mary B



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I'm sitting on a beach, my mum's favourite place where we used to go on holidays. I was abused at the top of that cliff, there, at that age – and I wasn't ugly, I was a lovely little girl. I just see myself sitting on that stone, a lonely person surrounded by ugliness. I was so lonely.



© Mary B | 2018 | I am One in Four

This photo is reminiscent of a physical trance like condition that would come over me, from time to time in my early teens, after I was abused by my sister's husband. Similar to a broken black and white television screen. It was like a blindness. My mind took over, I would question who I really was, like some worthless piece of crap. It was almost like there were two of me. It was horrible, I thought everyone was against me. Lately I discovered it was a type of dissociation, even I didn't want to know. Twenty two years later, I contacted One in Four after the abuser approached one of my children and I went mad. A therapist once asked if I had a good childhood and I replied yeah I did, then they asked if my childhood would be good enough for my daughter and I was startled, Jesus no. It's just that... even I disassociate with abuse. I outed the abuser. I told my sister, his wife. She accepted what I said and cried and hugged me. The next day she went on holidays with him. I believe she knew long before I told her. I wasn't in a position to bring a criminal case because it would have been in the news and my children are too young to be made aware of what happened their mother. I brought a civil case. He admitted what he did. I had some of his children told because they have children of their own, I had been very close to them. I told my father and he said 'say your prayers!m not

prepared to upset another family'. I anticipated his reaction so I wasn't surprised. He died recently and I hadn't spoken to him for a number of years and I was ok with that. I don't have a relationship with any of my family of origin anymore. I can't think about that too much. What really makes me angry in relation to sexual abuse is the general lack of interest, like this image we are all blinded. It's too dirty a subject. I reported him, through the help of One in Four, to the HSE seven years ago. Initially they said they couldn't do anything unless I brought a criminal charge. Then they didn't know who was dealing with it, then the case was closed, then it wasn't. Seven years later, still nothing. This abuser stills walk free, larger than life, adored by all, even those who know what he is. He's still out there and I can't get him stopped. He needs to be afraid of somebody and I hate that this has to be me. What happened to me is history, it's done, but surely we can do more to protect our children now. We cannot be blinded by the filthy bastard masquerading as the close family friend. My nightmare is some other child coming to me in ten years' time saying 'he did it to me, and he did it to you and why didn't you stop him?'

I just want to stop this fucker; can someone guarantee me he won't do this again?



© Mary B | 2018 | I am One in Four

This is a picture that I took on holidays. It reminds me of how I felt when I was a child after I was abused. I felt very alone and I believed that what happened to me was because I was ugly. I was consumed with guilt and shame. I felt very insignificant and I always felt ugly. To the extent

that I was fixated about how I looked for a long time, I had to try and make myself pretty. My automatic mode still blames me, it takes a conscious effort to see the truth. I appear confident but like the bird, I'm paddling like hell underneath.



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As a family we came into therapy in One in Four for the first time recently. I have this big thing about lies, I hate lies. I really feel that I have to live my life with some degree of integrity. I guess that emerges from what I came from, all the hidden stuff. I have a need to be a good mother, I need to know my kids are okay, I can't just let it go.

In therapy we talked about all sorts of things, trying to identify what the issues were in our family. My middle daughter is shy. She's 13. She's very timid in her voice – and she says 'well, I get nervous the way mum and dad fight all the time'.

She spoke about how it made her feel, that was the biggest truth of our family - and my beautiful girl just said it out.

On reflection, I would never have been able to speak like that at her age, and she's a quiet little girl, the way I was at that age. That was probably around the same age that I was abused. It really wasn't nice to hear what she was saying, but I was so grateful that she was able to speak her truth. I was so proud of her. So for me that's my hope. You can see the truth in her eyes.

Des



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See no evil, speak no evil, hear no evil – and that's the way it was. The abuse wasn't spoken about, wasn't seen and you definitely weren't heard when you were a child.



© Des | 2018 | I am One in Four



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This picture represents my uncle and auntie, I was abused by an uncle and you can see where baby is.



© Des | 2018 | I am One in Four

I think this is self-explanatory, what's going on – uncle is doing what he wants with the baby while Mammy, and Daddy and Aunt are blissfully unaware of what's happening or so they pretend.



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This is how I feel I've lived most of my life – in a glass box, where no one can see me, no-one can hear me. I'm just a shadow within the family.

Acknowledgments

We would like to sincerely thank the eight men and women who stood beside us and generously shared their experiences with such openness, honesty and vulnerability with us for this project. This project is fundamentally a participatory co-researched endeavour and would not have been possible without their generosity of time and spirit. Photovoice is a method that demands transparency and openness from participants with the aim of revealing truths. This group took that challenge head-on and trusted us with their experiences, they provided us with not only their testimonies, but their unconditional support in the sharing of our own – it was a pleasure and a privilege to work alongside each of them.

We would secondly like to thank One in Four; to Executive Director Maeve Lewis, Clinical Director Eileen Finnegan, Head of Fundraising John Ryan and Deirdre Kenny, Advocacy Director for getting fully behind the project from the outset and providing us and the participants with their full support. The project would not have been possible without the expert therapeutic support and guidance of psychotherapists Bobbi Grogan and Conn Dorai-Raj who sat with us in each of our workshops and fully supported both us and the rest of the group throughout the project. Knowing that we had that expert therapeutic support in place allowed us all to feel safe enough to share our experiences with openness and vulnerability. We would like to thank artist and designer Erin McClure for helping us to bring our vision for this project to life with her beautiful artwork and designs.

Dr. Maria Quinlan

Patrick Bolger

About Us

Dr. Maria Quinlan is a research fellow at University College Dublin (UCD), and Head of Research at the Institute of Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy (IICP). Maria is a sociologist who specialises in the use of creative, person-centred research methods which aim to facilitate people in sharing their lived experience. She is passionate about putting the participant at the centre of the research process and using innovative methods which aim to empower people to become co-researchers and to share their stories. Maria is a multidisciplinary researcher who uses a variety of innovative participatory action research methodologies, including photovoice and video-ethnography to explore how people experience their world. She is the founder of the Pink Flower Company, a research consultancy which focuses on creating actionable insight regarding issues of equality and inclusion.

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Patrick Bolger is a visual artist who has over twenty years' experience in the production of still and moving images. Patrick works with a range of high-profile national and international clients on photography and documentary projects. His work is ethnographically-informed, embedding qualitative life-course interview methodology to explore the lived experience of participants within his projects. He has collaborated with Maria on a variety of research projects which use both photovoice and video-ethnography methodologies, facilitating group discussion and guiding participants in the use of visual methods to find their voice and tell their stories. Patrick places connections, authenticity and trust at the centre of all creative output.

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Glossary

Addiction:	The fact or condition of being addicted to a particular substance or activity.
Afraid:	Feeling fear or anxiety; frightened. Unwilling or reluctant to do something for fear of the consequences. Anxious about the well-being or safety of.
Denial:	Refusal to acknowledge an unacceptable truth or emotion or to admit it into consciousness, used as a defence mechanism.
Horseplay:	Rough, boisterous play.
Groping:	Fondle (someone) for sexual pleasure roughly or clumsily, or without the person's consent.
Guilt:	The fact of having committed a specified or implied offence or crime. A feeling of having committed wrong or failed in an obligation.
Memory:	The faculty by which the mind stores and remembers information.
Power:	The ability or capacity to do something or act in a particular way.
Rape:	The crime, typically committed by a man, of forcing another person to have sexual intercourse with the offender against their will.
Secret:	Not known or seen or not meant to be known or seen by others.
Shame:	A painful feeling of humiliation or distress caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behaviour.
Silence:	Complete absence of sound. The fact or state of abstaining from speech. The avoidance of mentioning or discussing something.
Suicide:	The action of killing oneself intentionally.
Testimony:	A solemn protest or declaration.
Torture:	The action or practice of inflicting severe pain on someone as a punishment or in order to force them to do or say something. Great physical or mental suffering.
Trauma:	A deeply distressing or disturbing experience. Emotional shock following a stressful event or a physical injury, which may lead to long-term neurosis.
Violence:	Behaviour involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone or something.

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Design and cover illustration by Erin McClure Design

I created an abstract, naive drawing for the cover illustration and overlaid this with painterly textures and dots. I hope this illustration appears somewhat child-like in its appearance, as a reference back to the inner child who needs nurturing through recognition, expression and play. The blue and pink abstract shapes represent a harmony or coming together of the masculine and feminine elements, which reflects this aspect of the healing process. The tree ring motif is a visual representation of our resilience and ability to heal and grow.

The floating dots are to represent people – three in the pastel pink tone associated with children and one red, a colour which I chose for its jarring quality – to stand out and communicate the violence and trauma suffered by the one in four Irish people who are affected by sexual violence.

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 **One in Four** 
Sexual abuse. From surviving to living.



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